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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1975 the Eugene (Oregon) school board appointed a task force to make a comprehensive study related to all aspects of possible closure of small schools. Consideration was given to population and enrollment trends; economics; building condition; school size; school design; neighborhood and community implications; program capacity; staffing; alternatives in personnel, support programs, and facilities; and criteria for evaluation of low enrollment schools. Among the group's recommendations were that no elementary school be closed at the time; that the school board set a standard for the amount of non-classroom-space necessary for effective operation of an elementary school; that alternative use of extra space in any of the 31 elementary schools be actively sought; that whenever enrollment at any school drops below 75 percent of program capacity, a committee determine the best use of all parts of that school; that alternative use for buildings be found before any schools are closed; that small neighborhood schools accessible on foot be maintained even at some additional costs, and that when new schools are constructed, buildings be designed for an enrollment of 200 to 350 students. (Author/IRT)

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FINAL REPORT
OF THE
SMALL SCHOOLS TASK FORCE

FEBRUARY 16, 1976

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1975 the School Board of District 4J appointed a task force to make a comprehensive study related to all aspects of possible closure of small schools. Consideration was to be given to such things as population predictions, building capacity figures, per pupil costs, age and safety of buildings, alternative uses of buildings, and educational programs.

The Small Schools Task Force was originally composed of six voting members appointed by the Board, nine voting members selected by the District's nine smallest (by enrollment) schools' Advisory Councils, and six nonvoting ex officio members appointed by the School District.

From the beginning, the Task Force acknowledged its responsibility to be as unbiased as possible. Nevertheless, we recognized that nine of the 14 voting (non-ex officio) members represented small enrollment schools. Undoubtedly, this factor has had some influence on our final report. However, we wish to point out that of the 15 members who were active during the entire tenure of the Task Force, seven did not represent small schools. Therefore, we believe that effective and objective discussion and debate representing a variety of opinions preceeded the formation and acceptance of all recommendations and conclusions found in this report.

Early in its work the Task Force agreed that the declining enrollment situation in the whole district should not be identified as only a small school issue. We agreed to focus primarily upon the nine identified smallest schools but understood that according to our charge we would have to consider the smaller schools within the context of the entire school system.

In pursuing our charge, the Task Force visited all nine small enrollment schools and discussed issues of concern with their principals or representatives. The Task Force also visited the Opportunity Center and Howard School, a representative large school. Following the October 17, 1975, release of our Preliminary Report, two public hearings were held. Response to the report was also provided by a questionnaire and through numerous letters from individuals and organizations in Eugene and throughout the country. To obtain still more information, a meeting was held with elementary school principals and another with elementary school teachers. All information received was considered prior to the writing of this final report.

All of the voting members participating in this report and the two ex officio planning department representatives approved the findings and recommendations as contained in Chapter One and are in substantial agreement with the remainder of the report.

The Task Force wishes to thank Marilyn Neill, a graduate student in the Department of Architecture at the University of Oregon, for her assistance with the chapter on school size.

The Task Force is especially grateful to Billi Geser of the District 4J Public Relations staff for her thoughtful and enthusiastic assistance with this report.

Questions or comments pertaining to this report, or requests for copies, should be directed to Phil George, Public Information Director, School District 4J, 200 North Monroe, Eugene, Oregon 97402.

Additional copies of this report will be available from the Office of Media Services, School District 4J, 200 North Monroe, Eugene, Oregon 97402. The price is 75¢ per copy. Checks should be made payable to School District 4J.

CHAPTER ONE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings and recommendations are summarized here and developed in detail in the body of the report.

Findings:

1 - Sometime during the 1980's, the metropolitan area's population, projected by Lane Council of Governments to be 212,692 in 1985, should include a sufficient number of children to reverse the downward enrollment trend of first through sixth grade students experienced by the District since 1969.

Whether by 1985 these students will live close enough to existing schools to fill them without radical shifts in attendance area boundaries and bussing depends on a host of external factors including changes in life style, the availability of energy supplies, and land use, housing, and transportation planning decisions.

Population and employment projections prepared for the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area indicate that about 277,000 people will reside in this area by the year 2000. Even assuming a continuance of the current low birth rate, this number of people should include sufficient children in the first through sixth grades to more than fill all existing elementary schools in the District. Furthermore, these same projections coupled with Eugene's continued effort to conserve central area neighborhoods indicate that the children will live sufficiently close to existing schools to fill them to program capacity, although some boundary adjustments and limited bussing may be necessary.

2 - Meaningful cost comparisons among schools are difficult to arrive at because of the District's change in accounting procedures, variations of types of school considered and shifts of kindergarten population. It is clear that most costs are dependent on total enrollment and would remain the same no matter where students are located.

The estimated annual savings of closing but not disposing of an elementary school and relocating the program varies from $17,000 to $50,000. These estimates do not assign dollar values to nonbudget items such as the value to the neighborhood of maintaining a neighborhood school and center. School closure may also adversely affect property values and have budget consequences resulting from voter dissatisfaction. The net savings of closing one school represents about 1/3 of 1% of the total cost of the elementary school system.

3 - The average expense of operating the nine smaller enrollment schools is slightly more than that of the 22 larger schools. In 1974-75 these smaller schools cost approximately $1,382 per student and the larger schools, $1,307 per student.

4 - There is no reported condition of safety hazard, deterioration, or electrical/mechanical/structural inadequacy in any of the 31 elementary

schools which would of itself warrant school closure.

5 - Age of itself is not a valid criterion for abandonment of a school building. The Task Force did not find any major conflict between traditional architectural spaces and innovative programs. It has not been convincingly demonstrated that the traditional plans of older school buildings are inferior educationally to newer, more fashionable, open spaces.

6 - Small schools offer a greater opportunity for student participation and more individualized attention. The more intimate atmosphere offsets the larger schools' ability to provide greater diversity of program.

7 - The Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area 1990 Plan, which was approved by the District 4J School Board, emphasizes the importance of preserving neighborhood schools: "Elementary schools represent the central feature of most residential neighborhoods and a lack of such facilities can, as much as anything else, reduce the livability of an area."

It is clear to the Task Force that closure of any school would seriously disrupt the texture of neighborhood life. The Task Force believes that a neighborhood school accessible on foot serves as a vital center for community activities. This belief is reinforced by the City Council in their decision to use Federal Community Development funds to stabilize inner city neighborhoods. Reaction from the principals of the nine smallest enrollment schools and testimony from parents, Neighborhood Associations, and other community residents at the two public hearings lead the Task Force to conclude that neighborhood reaction to closure of a school would be intense and well organized.

8 - Schools with extra space are currently using this space creatively to the benefit of their educational programs.

Recommendations:

1 - No elementary school should be closed at this time.

2 - The School Board should set a standard for the amount of nonclassroom space necessary for effective operation of an elementary school. Program capacity figures should be revised with this standard in mind. Attendance area boundaries should be revised to ease crowding. If enrollment at any school falls below 120 to 150, innovative plans of grouping students and allocating personnel should be tried. The School Board should develop a procedure to continue and coordinate these tasks.

3 - Alternative use of extra space in any of the 31 elementary schools should be actively sought, both in the public and private sector. Special programs in the district should receive first consideration. The School Board should set a policy for the most desirable uses of this space and develop a procedure to attract and evaluate potential users. Any income generated by alternative uses should be allocated to relieve overcrowding, primarily in the north region schools.

4 - Whenever enrollment at any school drops below 75% of program capacity, a

committee made up of representatives from that school's attendance area, from the community at large, and from the School District should be appointed to apply criteria recommended by the Task Force in Chapter Eleven to determine the best use of all parts of that school.

5 - At the present time nine schools are below 75% of program capacity. Three of those schools, Harris, Laurel Hill, and Whiteaker, are represented on this Task Force. We applied the criteria in Chapter Eleven and make the following recommendations for those three schools.

   a - Harris School should remain open but alternative uses should be found for some of the classrooms.

   b - Laurel Hill should remain open, but alternative uses should be found for some of the classrooms. If enrollment continues to decline, this school should consider innovative plans for grouping students and allocating personnel.

   c - Whiteaker should remain open in light of the City's efforts to stabilize the inner city.

6 - The School Board should appoint a committee to apply the criteria in Chapter Eleven to the six other schools which fall below 75% of program capacity: Adams, Dunn, Meadow Lark, Parker, Patterson, and Willakenzie. Recommendations for alternative uses of space in these six schools should also take into consideration alternative use of space in Harris and Laurel Hill Schools since extra space may be more desirable to potential users if it is concentrated in one building.

7 - Full time principals should be assigned to the four small schools which now have half-time principals until the District's present staffing plan is reexamined.

8 - Alternative use for a building should be found before a school is closed to avoid the vandalism invited by an empty building.

9 - The Task Force recognizes the importance of small neighborhood schools accessible on foot and recommends that they be maintained even at some additional cost.

10 - When new schools are constructed, buildings should be designed for an enrollment of 200 to 350 students.

CHAPTER TWO

POPULATION AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Summary. Population and employment projections prepared for the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area indicate that about 277,000 people will reside in this area by the year 2000. Even assuming a continuance of the current low birth rate, this number of people should include sufficient children in the first through sixth grades to more than fill all existing elementary schools in the District. Furthermore, these same projections coupled with Eugene's continued effort to conserve central area neighborhoods indicate that the children will live sufficiently close to existing schools to fill them to program capacity, although some boundary adjustments and limited bussing may be necessary.

Although School District 4J has been experiencing a decline in grades one through six enrollment since 1969, by 1985 there should be about 212,700 people in this metropolitan area. This is a 30 percent increase over a 1970 population of 148,670, and, therefore, there will likely be enough children of elementary school age to reverse the downward trend. Whether by 1985 these students will live close enough to existing schools to fill them without radical shifts in attendance area boundaries and bussing depends on a host of external factors including changes in life style, the availability of energy supplies, and land use, housing, and transportation planning decisions.

Notwithstanding uncertainties, Eugene is committed to the vitality of its central city neighborhoods as exemplified in the current allocation of Community Development funds to bolster the livability of these areas. This action is supported by several statements in the officially adopted Eugene-Springfield Area Metropolitan 1990 Plan and Eugene Goals and Policies 1974 as referenced in the Chapter on Neighborhood and Community Implications. This commitment is likely to continue into the 1980's, lending support to the renewed interest of young families in older residential neighborhoods characterized by older but basically sturdy housing stock located relatively close to employment, shopping, cultural and educational centers. This factor adds a new dimension to planning for adequate provision of public services when compared to what was until recently almost an exclusive interest by young families in acquiring new or nearly new homes on the periphery of the urban area. All these factors reinforce one another, enhancing the possibility of generating a significant number of additional children who will live in or close to the attendance areas of all existing elementary schools.

Source Material, Methodology, and Application. Population projections prepared by the Lane Council of Governments and the use of these projections by a team of local planners in conjunction with a transportation study for the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area served as the primary base for this chapter. The Lane Council of Governments produced a report in January, 1974 entitled Population and Employment Projections For Lane County, Oregon. As stated in that publication, "Population projections are 'best estimates' based generally on historical trends and relationships." It is further explained that projections are not predictions in that no attempt is made to predict changes in future conditions that might result from major changes in natural, technological, economic, political, social, or cultural trends. The basic assumption was that the future would be an outgrowth of present trends and conditions.

Fertility and survival data were used to project future resident population. Migration was added to resident population because it was assumed people would continue to move to this area as jobs become available over and above those filled by the resident labor force. Furthermore, as stated on page 9 of Eugene's Community Goals and Policies 1974, although the City may not deliberately attract more population, efforts to preserve the livability of the community will continue to attract people seeking a better living environment.

The Lane Council of Governments publication includes projections in five-year intervals beginning with the 1970 census through 2005. Projections are catergorized by five-year age groups and broken down into male and female. The forecasts are for the entire Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area; in other words, there is no breakdown into census tracts or other divisions.

During 1973 through 1975, a team of local planners assembled on several occasions and using the Lane Council of Governments population projections for the year 2000, assigned dwelling units by structural type (single family, multiple family, mobile home) to transportation zones (divisions of census tracts) throughout the metropolitan area. Obviously, there was a good deal of subjectivity involved in the exercise, including numerous assumptions. Examples include the following:

1 - Birth rates will continue to decrease.

2 - Death rates will continue to increase slightly.

3 - The major impact on metropolitan population growth will increasingly be in-migration.

4 - The community will develop increasing resistance toward population growth.

5 - Apartment house construction will account for a high percentage of new housing but will be considerably lower than during recent years.

6 - Mobile homes and single family housing will account for more than 50 percent of new construction.

7 - The average number of people per household will decrease to 2.8.

8 - Land outside the "1990 urban service area" of Eugene and Springfield will be generally maintained as rural tracts that will not generate a need for urban utilities or facilities.

9 - The urban community will not allow urban growth to extend in direction, intensity, or density beyond the existing physical or financial capability of each serving agency, nor will it

allow the intensification or extension of urban development which consumes reserves in service capacity which were planned and paid for by others but not currently used.

10 - The cities of Eugene and Springfield will continue to be the sole providers of sanitary sewer service to areas within the metropolitan area. Sanitary sewer service will be extended to the Santa Clara and River Road areas by the year 2000.

11 - The density ranges outlined in the 1990 Plan and in those community plans adopted in conformity with it will be used to determine appropriate density ranges for undeveloped areas. Existing plans, development patterns, and zoning districts will provide the basis for determining land use.

12 - The cohort survival method of population projection provides a reasonably accurate estimation of the future population.

After dwelling units by structural type were assigned by the planners to the various transportation zones, L-COG translated the data to population per transportation zone for the metropolitan area for the year 2000. Working with the planners, adjustments were made to come up with a total year 2000 population equal to that independently projected for the metropolitan area by L-COG in its series of five-year projections previously described, i.e., 277,000 people.

Finally, L-COG was able to merge its own data on metropolitan-wide population by five-year age groups for every five years through the year 2005 with the data prepared for the transportation study which is expressed as population per transportation zone for the year 2000. This merging made possible projections by five-year age groupings in five year intervals for metropolitan area census tracts.

Using available data, the Task Force was able to locate each elementary school along with its present program capacity. This information was then compared to the number of school children projected per census tract for the year 2000 (see map and table). According to the more conservative of the two alternative forecasts depicted on the table, by the year 2000 first through sixth grade enrollment in District 4J metropolitan area census tracts will have increased to 16,113 students. Excluding Twin Oaks and Coburg Elementary Schools because they are not in the metropolitan area for which population projections were prepared, this would be an increase of nearly 95%, or 7,841 more students enrolled in grades one through six in the District than on September 30, 1975. Program capacity, including portable classrooms and temporary space, in District 4J elementary schools in the metropolitan area was calculated by the District as 11,474 (excludes Coburg and Twin Oaks). An enrollment of 16,113 six to eleven year olds in the year 2000 would be 4,639 students (about 40%) over September 30, 1975, program capacity. It should be noted, of course, that some children may attend private schools in the district, but this factor should be at least partially offset by five and twelve year olds in grades one or six.

If the population is distributed according to either of the alternative forecasts, schools in all areas and sub-areas depicted on the map will be filled to capacity in the year 2000. As stated elsewhere in this report, there may be a need for limited bussing and attendance boundary changes to minimize these area by area inequities, at least in the interim between now and the year 2000.

While the Task Force is comfortable projecting that there will be sufficient elementary school age children to fill all existing District schools in 25 years, we find it more difficult to make similar projections by area for the next ten years (1976-1985). The Task Force attempted to gain some insight into this question by surveying 20 active Eugene realtors to obtain their opinions regarding housing sales trends and population growth in 15 elementary school attendance areas.[1] The question asked was, "Would the elementary school age population increase, remain the same, or decrease in the next five to ten years?" We received 14 replies, and a summary of their opinions by school attendance area follows:

Adams: More than half believed it would remain the same, but a significant number also believed it would increase.

Coburg: A clear majority believed there would be an increase.

Condon: More than half believed there would be a decrease, but a few were of the opinion it would remain the same.

Dunn: A clear majority believed it would remain the same.

Edison: Half believed it would decrease, the others were split equally between an increase and remaining the same.

Fox Hollow: A clear majority believed it would increase.

Harris: A clear majority believed it would remain the same.

Laurel Hill: More than half believed it would increase.

Lincoln: More than half believed it would decrease, however, a few believed it would increase.

Magladry: A clear majority believed it would remain the same.

Meadow Lark: A majority believed it would remain the same.

Parker: A majority believed it would remain the same, but a few believed it would increase.

Patterson: A majority believed it would decrease, but a few believed it would remain the same.

Whiteaker: A clear majority believed it would remain the same, however, a few believed it would decrease.

Willakenzie: A majority believed it would increase.

The Task Force has no additional information that indicates agreement or disagreement with this opinion survey. We recognize, however, that unpredictable events such as a long-term gasoline shortage could invalidate the accuracy of any projection, be it statistically or empirically based. In any event, we believe population projections from all sources should be considered within the context of the entire Task Force report.

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[1] Nine schools represented on the Task Force plus those six schools below 75% of capacity.

Finally, the Task Force notes that there has been a downward trend in grades one through six enrollment since 1969 (see graph). However, in a November 10, 1975, report prepared by the Division of Research, Development, and Evaluation, a slight enrollment upturn is projected for 1976-77. Furthermore, since the district made a commitment to kindergartens in 1973, there has been an increase in K-6 enrollment. Obviously, it is still too early to state with certainty that a trend has been established, but there is little doubt that overall district enrollment and attendance in each separate elementary school area will be greater than would be the case without a kindergarten program.

Conclusion. Sometime during the 1980's, the metropolitan area's population, projected to be 212,692 people by L-COG in 1985, should include a sufficient number of children to reverse the downward enrollment trend of first through sixth grade students experienced by the District since 1969. In fact, the District predicts an upturn in the coming school year. If Eugene's commitment to central area neighborhoods, as expressed in adopted plans and policies and as reflected in current Community Development spending programs, continues, there is an excellent chance that by the year 2000 enough children will reside within walking distance of all existing elementary schools to eliminate the need for extensive bussing or radical attendance area boundary shifts.

TABLE ONE

ENROLLMENT, PROGRAM CAPACITY, AND FORECASTS FOR THE YEAR 2000, FOR 6-11 YEAR OLDS BY CENSUS TRACT GROUPS, SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J

Area[1]	1970 6-11 Year Olds	Sept. 30, 1975 Enrollment[2,3] Grades 1-6	Sept. 30, 1975 Program Capacity[2]	Forecasts[2,4] Alternatives	
				1	2
1	2,928	2,519	3,203	3,880	3,610
2	1,995	1,495	2,163	3,649	4,299
3	737	1,010	1,127	1,485	1,625
4A	812	525	1,024	1,491	1,024
4B	2,767	1,896	2,708	3,766	3,853
4C	838	713	999	1,265	1,017
4	4,412	3,134	4,731	6,522	5,894
5	227	114	250	843	685
TOTALS	10,299	8,272	11,474	16,379	16,113

Sources: 1970 Census, School District 4J, L-COG

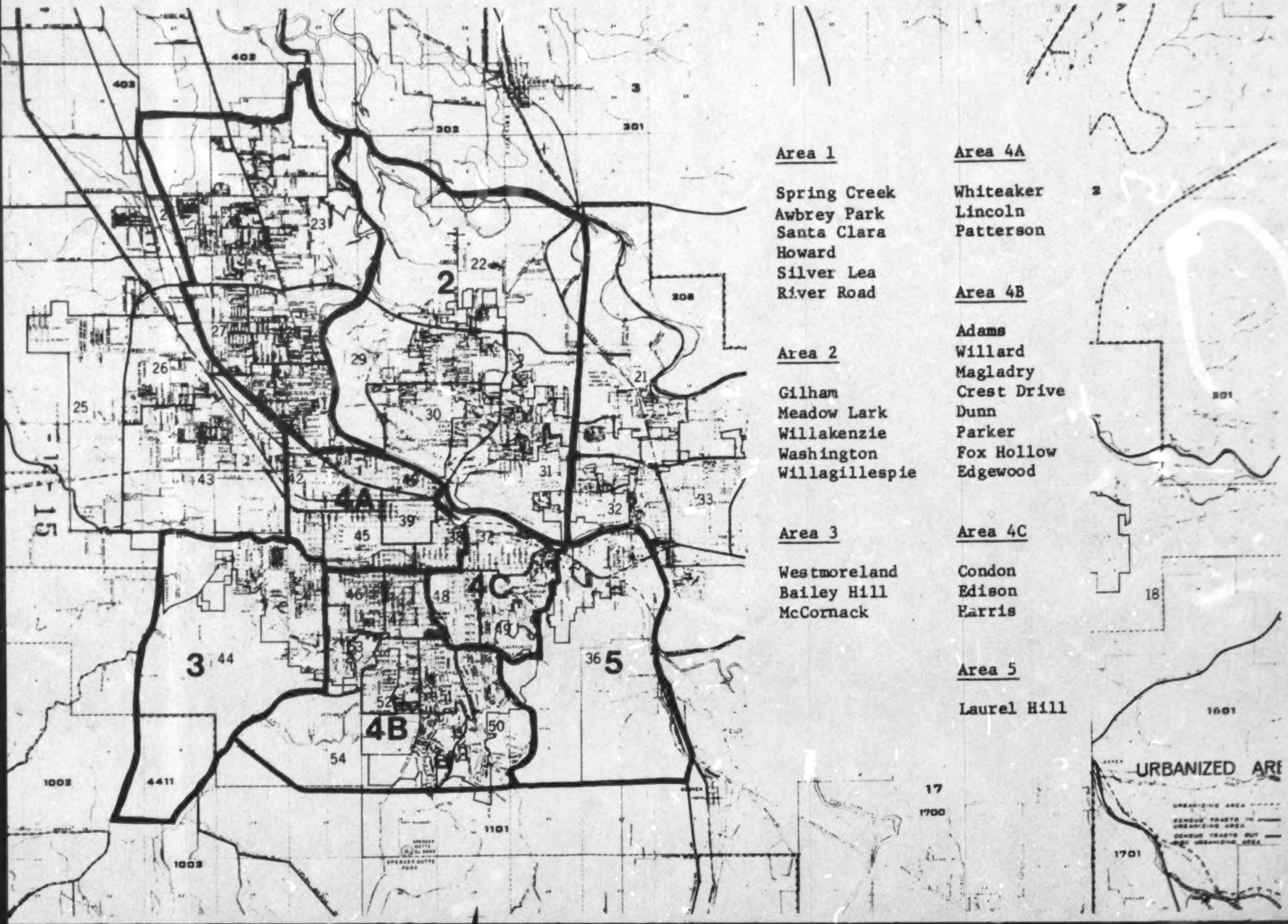
[1] Areas are made up from the following Census Tracts:

Area 1 = 1/2 of Tract 24, Tracts 23, 27, 28, and 41
Area 2 = Tracts 22, 29, 30, and 31
Area 3 = Tract 44
Area 4A = 1/2 of Tract 42, Tracts 38, 39, 40, and 45
Area 4B = Tracts 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, and 54
Area 4C = Tracts 37, 48, and 49
Area 5 = Tract 36

[2] Present enrollment, program capacity, and the forecasts do not reflect data for Coburg or Twin Oaks Elementary Schools because these two schools are outside the metropolitan area.

[3] Includes alternative schools and unclassified students. Does not include 1,390 kindergarten enrollment.

[4] Forecasts of student population derived from two alternative forecasts prepared in conjunction with a transportation study for the metropolitan area. They do not include kindergarten students or students that are five or 12 years old who may be in elementary schools. Likewise, however, the figures are not adjusted for students in parochial and other private schools.


URBANIZED ARE
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17
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1003
4411
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4A
4B
4C
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Area 1

Spring Creek
Awbrey Park
Santa Clara
Howard
Silver Lea
River Road

Area 2

Gilham
Meadow Lark
Willakenzie
Washington
Willagillespie

Area 3

Westmoreland
Bailey Hill
McCornack

Area 4A

Whiteaker
Lincoln
Patterson

Area 4B

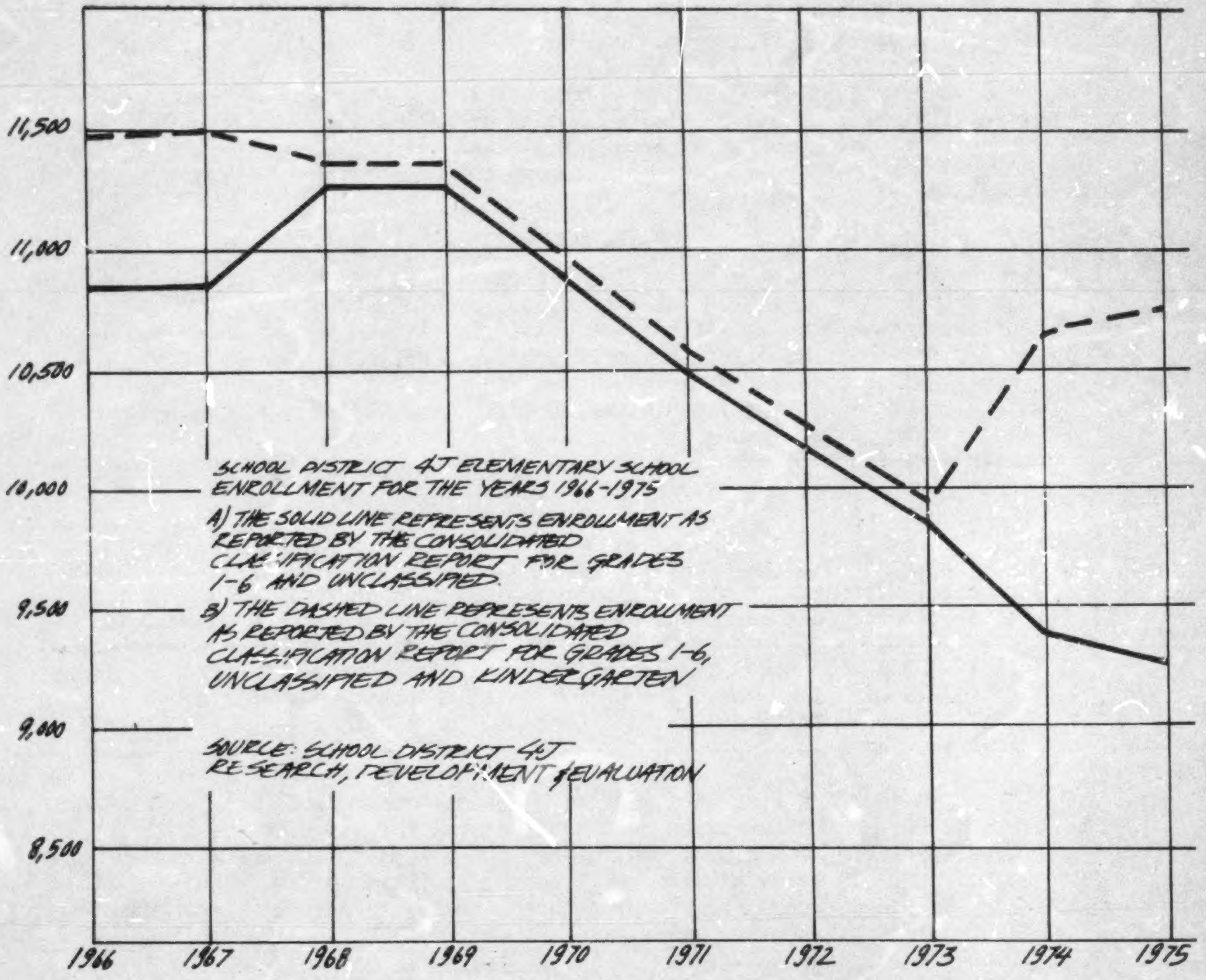
Adams
Willard
Magladry
Crest Drive
Dunn
Parker
Fox Hollow
Edgewood

Area 4C

Condon
Edison
Harris

Area 5

Laurel Hill



SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR THE YEARS 1966-1975

A) THE SOLID LINE REPRESENTS ENROLLMENT AS REPORTED BY THE CONSOLIDATED CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR GRADES 1-6 AND UNCLASSIFIED.

B) THE DASHED LINE REPRESENTS ENROLLMENT AS REPORTED BY THE CONSOLIDATED CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR GRADES 1-6, UNCLASSIFIED AND KINDERGARTEN

SOURCE: SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMICS

Introduction

If the Eugene School system were stagnant and unchanging, the task of analyzing the comparative costs of small-enrollment schools versus larger enrollment schools could have been accomplished without qualification. Several moderating factors must be noted. Due to a recent change in accounting methods, accurate year-to-year comparisons among the 31 elementary schools cannot be developed, and, therefore, long-term trends are speculative at best. The District's new method of allocating teachers, specialists, and clerical help to the various schools has also made comparisons difficult. In addition, difficulties are created by changes in the location and size of kindergarten programs.

The small-enrollment schools are themselves varied. The enrollment to program capacity ratios ranged from lowest in the district (52% at Laurel Hill) to the highest (120% at Fox Hollow) as of September 30, 1975. Averaging and combining data from such disparate situations can only be done with misgivings. Some of the schools have significant numbers of children from low-income families who have special needs, partially met by Title I money. Several of the schools have active community school programs, which in 1975 were fully funded by District 4J. For bookkeeping purposes, bussing costs were prorated to all schools on an ADM (average daily membership) basis. One of the nine schools had no students bussed in that year, while two other schools had children bussed long distances.

Two schools contain entirely separate alternative schools along with the regular program in the same building, which generates some confusion as to both the cost per pupil and the normal ADM for each building. In addition, one school contains an alternative high school program which raises questions about our elementary school data. Several of the buildings are fairly old, thus requiring more maintenance than newer buildings. At certain schools there are special programs for the deaf, educable mentally retarded, and others.

When the Task Force was working with the most recent (September 30, 1975) enrollment figures, we were divided over the issue of how to treat the kindergarten enrollment, which does not always follow the attendance boundaries. Instead, kindergartens are found in schools which have available classroom space. For example, three schools have no kindergartens in their buildings. On the other hand, Howard, with a normal ADM of 447 students, has only 72 K's, while River Road, with 411 ADM, has 130 K's, obviously taking some of the load from Howard. The obvious conclusion is that while average figures are interesting and somewhat helpful, they can be misleading when applied to individual schools. Despite all the above caveats, the Task Force recognizes the importance of economic factors to the taxpayers and School Board. Consequently, we have striven to present a straightforward analysis of economic issues.

What are the elements of cost of the 31 elementary schools?

The total cost for all 31 elementary schools was $13,573,000 for 1974-75. In terms of the primary categories of expenses, the percentage breakdown was as follows:

TABLE ONE

Elementary School Expenses by Category	1974-75 $(x 1,000)	Percent
Administration	467	3.4
Instruction	8,911	65.7
Health Services	139	1.0
Pupil Transportation	229	1.7
Operation of Plant	958	7.1
Maintenance of Plant	616	4.5
Fixed Charges	1,867	13.7
Food Services	45	0.3
Capital Outlay	306	2.3
Other	35	0.3
	13,573	100.0

Please Note:

1) Instruction plus Fixed Charges are 79.4% of the total.
2) Plant operation and maintenance costs are 11.6% of the total.

It is obvious that the single most expensive item is instruction. If the direct expenses are coupled with related costs of social security, retirement, and other fringe benefits, instructional costs amount to more than 79% of the total. The recently adopted staffing ratio of 18.4 to 1 insures that these instructional costs will be uniform regardless of school size or the number of buildings used. The actual cost of instruction will vary slightly with the age and experience of the teachers. Thus some schools may have higher per student costs if their teaching staffs are at the top of the salary scale. In principle, however, the use of staffing ratios means that the great bulk of instructional costs is independent of school size.

Similarly, most of the other expense categories are also dependent on total student enrollment figures and rather independent of where the students are located. For example, health and food services and central administration costs vary primarily with total enrollment, not so much with the location of that enrollment. With regard to the capital outlays expense, we see that it is a small percentage figure (1.1%), and by nature highly irregular and noncomparable. Pupil transportation costs are also a small part of the total. The home to school bussing expenses are evidently allocated to the schools simply on a pro rata basis of enrollment. This practice is actually unfair to the expense picture of those schools which have few if any children bussed to them and advantageous to those schools which have proportionately larger numbers of children bussed.

In 1974-75, how much more did it cost to run a small-enrollment elementary school than a large-enrollment school?

The Task Force wished to make comparisons of school costs which were applicable under the current staffing plan. This plan assigns instructional and office personnel by applying a pre-determined ratio to the number of students in each school. This has the effect of equalizing the actual instructional costs per pupil between large and small schools. Therefore, to develop a comparison, we pro-rated costs which are not tied to assignment by student ratio along with other costs that are normally pro-rated. The only remaining operating expenses of significance are the building operation and maintenance costs, and the principals' salaries.

The resulting computations indicate the average cost per student in a small school is only $75.00 more than in the other District schools:

Computation of Comparative Costs of Operating Nine
Selected "Smaller" Schools Compared to All Other Elementary Schools

		1974-75 Data
Total operating expenses, all 31 elementary schools		$13,232,126.00
Less:		
Total plant operation & maintenance	$1,573,844.00	
Total principals' salaries	614,572.00	
		2,188,416.00
Remainder, pro-rated and minor expenses, All schools		$11,043,710.00
ADM, all elementary schools, including K at 1/2, as of 9-30-74, not counting Action High[10,017] ÷ ADM cost of pro-rated and minor expenses, all elementary schools [11,043,710 ÷ 10,017] =		$ 1,102.50

Enrollment 9-30-74	9 Smaller ADM: 1,892	22 Larger ADM: 8,125
Pro-rated ADM costs, above	$ 1,102.50	$ 1,102.50
Total pro-rated costs for the group	$2,085,930.00	$ 8,957,813.00
Add:		
Plant Operations & Maintenance (actual)	350,162.00	1,223,682.00
Principals' salaries allocating one principal per school*	178,425.00	436,150.00
TOTAL COST	$2,614,517.00	$10,617,645.00
Cost per ADM	$ 1,382.00	$ 1,307.00
Greater cost per student, smaller schools, average		$75.00

*$614,572 total principal salaries ÷ $19,825 per principal

The current staffing plan stipulates half-time principals for the four smallest enrollment schools. The remaining FTE was allocated to the four largest schools. If this staffing plan was superimposed on the 1974-75 data, the resulting difference in cost would have been only $49.00 per student.

For comparison, it is interesting to note that the $49.00 figure is considerably less than the $112.00 average 1974-75 cost of bussing a student in the district.

What are the relative costs of operation and maintenance?

As we have seen from the perspective of the overall figures, most costs vary primarily with total enrollment. Those costs which are variable with the individual school (its size, age, character, etc.) are in the categories of plant operation and plant maintenance which represent about 11.6% of the total budget.

The relative efficiency of the various school facilities is shown in the right-hand column of Table Two. For these calculations we added the operating costs to the maintenance costs for each school and then divided this total by the average daily membership figure for that school. Obviously the end result is heavily influenced by the current school enrollment as well as the age and prior maintenance of the buildings. Generally speaking, there do not appear to be significant variations among the schools; the figure for Laurel Hill is obviously driven up by the relatively low current enrollment (52% of program capacity).

Empty Seats: Where Are They?

The Research, Development, and Evaluation Division provided us with the school capacity and utilization data shown on Table Two. The Division defines program capacity as the number of seats available when the school is fully occupied using its present educational program. We note that in several instances these capacity figures have been challenged as being too high. Since all classes are not the same size, flexibility is needed with regard to space allocations inside the school. Some empty seats are inevitable, and indeed, all 31 elementary schools have some. To put this issue in perspective we looked at enrollment as a percentage of program capacity for each school. These results are shown in Table Two.

There are 10 schools with an enrollment percentage of less than 75%; only four of these are among the nine smaller enrollment schools. Clearly, there are two different kinds of smaller enrollment schools: 1) those which were designed as larger schools but now have relatively small enrollments, and 2) those which were designed as small schools and whose small enrollments are utilizing their available space quite effectively.

TABLE TWO

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: SOME CAPACITIES AND COSTS

Elementary School	Enrollment ✪ (incl. K) 9-30-75	Enrollment as a % of Program Capacity	1974-75 Plant Op. & Maint. (incl. K)	A.D.M. 9-30-74 (incl.K)	1974-75 Plant Op. & Maint. per A.D.M.
Laurel Hill	129	52	$31,454	133	$236
Adams	253	56	48,425	307	158
Lincoln (not incl. Action High)	185	59	36,582	208	176
Whiteaker	198	63	44,229	234	189
Patterson	264	66	45,673	244	187
Parker	287	68	44,444	280	159
Willakenzie	282	68	50,422	336	150
Harris	246	69	43,590	226	193
Meadow Lark ●	392	71	59,594	426	140
Dunn	265	71	49,349	257	192
Willard	319	80	55,727	355	157
Twin Oaks	245	82	39,613	250	158
Condon (incl.Mag.Arts)	267	85	47,082	247	191
Silver Lea	429	86	63,802	463	138
Willagillespie	322	86	47,248	316	150
Howard	492	87	70,005	521	134
Washington	441	89	61,300	433	142
Edgewood	424	89	58,538	393	149
River Road	486	90	65,097	439	148
Santa Clara	423	90	58,138	419	139
Magladry ● ☆	137	91	23,601	130	182
Coburg	207	92	34,345	195	176
Gilham ● ☆	312	96	48,228	329	147
Edison (incl.Eastside)	315	96	51,177	324	158
McCornack ● ☆	341	99	54,725	339	161
Spring Creek ●	502	99	66,376	470	141
Awbrey Park ●	625	100	78,323	570	137
Crest Drive ●	255	102	39,922	235	170
Bailey Hill	410	107	54,807	348	157
Westmoreland	441	110	63,930	404	158
Fox Hollow ●	220	120	38,101	196	194

● No Kindergarten in 1974-75

☆ No Kindergarten in 1975-76

✪ Enrollment includes the maximum number of kindergarten students present at any one time (thus this figure varies slightly from the A.D.M.)

If one or more small schools were to be closed, what would the resulting savings be?

Starting again with the 1974-75 figures, the Task Force examined all nine small-enrollment schools, six additional schools which were below 75% of capacity, and three larger schools for purposes of comparison. Table Three shows the result of this analysis.

In Table Three, the total building operation and maintenance expenses as well as principals' salaries were regarded as money saved. Increased bussing expense, cost of maintaining the buildings and grounds of closed schools, cost of closing a school and moving its equipment, and the increased building operation and maintenance costs in the absorbing schools are regarded as reductions in the amounts saved.

The Task Force estimated that the upkeep of temporarily closed buildings would be approximately 20% of normal costs. Upkeep would include enough heat to prevent deterioration, occasional roof repairs and outside paint, grounds maintenance, regular inspection, and costs associated with vandalism and its prevention.

The estimates of average annual savings of closing a school for the first five years range from $17,000 to $50,000. These figures do not assign a value to the social, educational, and community importance of neighborhood schools; they are based strictly on our cost data. For comparison, the total elementary school budget in 1974-75 was $[illegible]3,573,000.

Since cost savings are the primary reason for the partial or full closure of elementary schools, it was revealing to examine the actual data related to closures in 49 school districts around the country as given in an extensive study directed by R. L. Andrews et al, (1974).[1] This data is summarized in Table Four. Their concluding comments in this regard are enlightening:

> In effect, then, 33.3% of the school districts who had calculated actual cost savings after the closure of elementary schools concluded that they had saved money.
>
> On the other hand, six school districts or 50% of those districts who had calculated actual costs concluded that no money had been saved by the closure of schools. The lack of cost savings were attributed to increased transportation costs, reduced school support, increased crime rate, decreased property values, and disruption of educational programs.
>
> As noted above, the remaining 16.7% of the schools indicated that the closures had cost the district more money. Thus, 66.7% of the school districts which had evaluated the effects of closures came to the conclusion that they had saved no money or that the closures were costing the district more money. Correspondingly, 33.3%

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[1] R. L. Andrews, et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

TABLE THREE

ESTIMATED COMPARATIVE FUTURE SAVINGS RESULTING FROM CLOSURE OF CERTAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BASED UPON 1974-75 FINANCIAL DATA ADJUSTED FOR SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN ALLOCATION OF PRINCIPALS

			SAVING			ANNUAL COSTS IF MOTHBALLED						
Original Group of Nine	Enrollment 1974-75	% Of Program Capacity	Plant Operation and Maintenance	(For Comparison) 1973-74 Plant Oper. & Mtce.	Average Elem. Principal's Salary	Addnl. Students to be Bussed	Estimated Increase In Bussing Cost	Maintenance of Bldg. & Grounds 20%	Increased Cost In New Building $17/ADM	ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVING	Closing and Moving Cost	First Year Saving
Coburg	207	92	$34,345	$33,351	$12,825	64	$ 7,190	$ 6,870	$3,519	$29,591	$1,200	$28,391
Condon/Magnet Arts	267	85	47,082	42,531	19,825	100	11,235	9,420	4,539	41,713	1,200	40,513
Edison/Eastside	315	96	51,177	44,996	19,825	30	3,371	10,230	5,355	52,046	1,200	50,846
Fox Hollow	220	120	38,101	35,513	19,825	100	11,235	7,620	3,740	35,331	1,200	32,131
Harris	246	69	43,590	44,027	19,825	50	5,618	8,720	4,182	44,895	1,200	43,695
Laurel Hill	129	52	31,454	33,951	12,825	55	6,179	6,290	2,193	29,617	1,200	28,417
Lincoln/Action High	294	95	36,582	36,174	12,825	60	6,741	7,320	4,998	38,720	1,200	37,520
			10,462					2,090				
Magladry	137	91	23,601	22,857	12,825	100	11,235	4,720	2,329	18,142	1,200	16,942
Whiteaker	198	63	44,229	40,491	19,825	100	11,235	8,850	3,366	40,603	1,200	39,403
Other Scools At Less Than 75% Program Capacity												
Adams	253	56	48,425	44,973	19,825	50	5,618	9,680	4,301	48,651	1,200	47,451
Dunn	265	71	49,349	44,606	19,825	132	14,830	9,870	4,505	39,969	1,200	38,769
Meadow Lark	392	71	59,594	64,609	19,825	250	28,088	11,919	4,505	34,907	1,200	33,707
Parker	287	68	44,444	45,660	19,825	80	8,988	8,890	4,879	41,512	1,200	40,312
Patterson	264	66	45,673	42,755	19,825	60	6,741	9,130	4,488	45,139	1,200	43,939
Willakenzie	282	68	43,439	45,360	19,825	50	5,618	8,690	4,794	44,162	1,200	42,962
For Purposes of Comparison, Three Larger Schools												
Howard	492	87	70,005	63,027	26,825	370	41,570	14,000	8,364	32,896	2,400	30,496
Spring Creek	502	99	66,376	60,013	26,825	430	48,311	13,270	8,534	23,086	2,400	20,686
Washington	441	89	56,691	55,540	19,825	280	31,458	11,340	7,497	26,221	2,400	23,821

(See notes on next page)

Notes to Table Three

Note 1

Because instructional costs and several other costs would follow the children, the primary savings would be derived from the elimination of costs to maintain and operate the buildings and from the elimination of principals' salaries.

Note 2

The enrollment figures used include the maximum number of kindergarten students in the school at any one time. Consequently these figures may differ slightly from the ADM figures.

Note 3

The program capacity figures used are those furnished to the Task Force by the Research, Development, and Evaluation Division; we note that these figures have been repeatedly challenged as being inaccurate, i.e., too large.

Note 4

Action High enrollment and costs are included for the Lincoln Elementary School, in order to take into consideration all school uses of the Lincoln building.

Note 5

Principals' salaries have been averaged due to probable future transfers between schools. There have been certain adjustments to conform to the 1975-76 staffing plan, wherein only 1/2 principal is allocated to each of the four smallest enrollment schools, and 1/2 additional administrator is assigned to the four largest enrollment schools. A $7,000 actual salary difference per affected school is estimated.

Note 6

Total bussing costs for all schools in 74-75	$454,687.00
Less: estimated nonvariable salaries	30,000.00
	$424,687.00
Total number of students bussed	3,780
Cost per student	$ 112.35

Note 7

Estimated increases in bussing cost are based on estimates of the additional number of students who will need bussing if the school is closed multiplied by $112.35 (above).

TABLE FOUR

Summary of Estimated Cost Savings by District*

District	COST SAVINGS CALCULATED			
	In-building Savings	Amount	Actual Savings	Amount
1 - Madison, WI	yes	uncertain	no	--
2 - Phoenix, AZ	yes	$80,000	yes	$50-$60,000
3 - Salt Lake City, UT	yes	$/sq.ft./student	no	--
4 - Plainview, NY	yes	salaries/op.main	no	--
5 - Canton, OH	yes	$30,000	no	--
6 - Cambrian, CA	yes	$38,000	no	--
7 - Des Moines, IA	yes	$50,000 (est.)	no	--
8 - Atlanta, GA	yes	uncertain	no	--
9 - Great Falls, MT	uncertain	--	no	--
10 - Chula Vista, CA	no	--	no	--
11 - Downey, CA	yes	$40,000	no	--
12 - Denver, CO	yes	personnel/util.	no	--
13 - Los Altos, CA	yes	$70,000 (est.)	no	--
14 - Dallas, TX	no	--	no	--
15 - Charlotte, NC	no	--	no	--
16 - Philadelphia, PA	no	--	no	--
17 - Freeport, NY	no	--	no	--
18 - Torrance, CA	yes	$140,000	no	--
19 - Sampson County, NC	no	--	no	--
20 - Wichita, KS	yes	$40-$50,000	yes	no savings
21 - Kansas City, MO	no	--	no	--
22 - Minneapolis, MN	yes	increased costs	yes	increased costs
23 - Spokane, WA	yes	$88,000	no	--
24 - Buffalo, NY	yes	$32-$81,000	no	--
25 - Arlington, VA	yes	$35,000	yes	$2,000
26 - Columbia, SC	yes	$20,000 (est.)	no	--
27 - Palo Alto, CA	yes	principal/secy salaries	no	--
28 - Lansing, MI	yes	not prepared to answer	no	--
29 - Pittsburgh, PA	yes	uncertain	yes	$10-$15,000
30 - Los Angeles, CA	yes	principal/secy	yes	no savings

TABLE FOUR (Continued)

District	COST SAVINGS CALCULATED			
	In-building Savings	Amount	Actual Savings	Amount
31 - Seattle, WA	no	--	no	--
32 - New Rochelle, NY	no	--	no	--
33 - Hinsdale, IL	no	--	no	--
34 - Glen Cove, NY	yes	none	yes	no savings
35 - Santa Ana, CA	no	--	no	--
36 - Kansas City, KS	yes	operating costs	yes	no savings built new building
37 - Sacramento, CA	no	--	no	--
38 - Santa Clara, CA	no	--	no	--
39 - Eau Claire, WI	yes	principal/secy/ maintenance	yes	$10-$15,000
40 - Hayward, CA	yes	$50,000	no	--
41 - San Antonio, TX	yes	principal/secy/ maintenance	yes	no savings
42 - Nashville, TN	yes	maintenance	yes	no savings
43 - Houston, TX	yes	uncertain	no	--
44 - Livonia, MI	yes	$50-$75,000	no	--
45 - Pontiac, MI	yes	$100,000 (est.)	no	--
46 - Abbeville, GA	yes	maintenance costs	yes	no savings
47 - Ann Arbor, MI	no	--	no	--
48 - Birmingham, MI	yes	$100,000 (est.)	no	--
49 - Peoria, IL	no	--	no	--

*Question asked was, "Have you calculated the actual savings gained by closing schools?"

Source: R. L. Andrews et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

concluded that they had saved money from the closures but it was less than had been projected before the schools were closed.[2]

Conclusion

Meaningful comparisons of costs among schools are difficult to arrive at because of the District's change in accounting procedures, variations of types of school considered, and shifts of kindergarten population. It is clear that most costs are dependent on total enrollment and would remain the same no matter where students are located. Actual savings which could be realized by closing a school fall into the range of $17,000 to $50,000. The Task Force believes that this savings estimate is realistic in the light of other cities' experiences as summarized in this chapter. We also believe that such a saving is not sufficient to justify the disruption of children's education and the disruption of the community which would result from school closure.

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[2] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

BUILDING CONDITION

1 - We are not aware of any physical condition of safety, deterioration, or electrical/mechanical/structural inadequacy in any of the 31 elementary schools which would of itself warrant school closure or which should become a major consideration in any question of school closure. Any decision for school closure should be made on the basis of other criteria. In this evaluation, we rely heavily upon information furnished by the District 4J Director of Maintenance, Harley Spencer.

Mr. Spencer commented specifically upon the necessity of repairs needed at each of the nine schools represented on this Task Force and at the additional six schools which are currently below 75% occupancy (Adams, Dunn, Meadow Lark, Parker, Patterson, and Willakenzie). He replied that there were no major (over $5,000) repair items known to be needed at any of these schools. However, roofing repairs are needed at many schools throughout the District and are estimated to total $200,000. Of the 15 elementary schools mentioned above, Willard and Parker are especially needing of this work, but Mr. Spencer could not make specific estimates.

Adequate comparative data about the physical condition and maintenance costs of the schools have not been recorded in the past although records now being initiated will make comparative study among schools easier in the future. It was therefore difficult to identify which schools are in worst condition or have been the most expensive to maintain. Mr. Spencer believed that Lincoln School was in the worst physical condition of the 31 elementary schools. Therefore, we analyzed it in some detail.

Fortunately, data about Lincoln School was more available that data for the other schools because of an engineer's study conducted in late 1974 by R. J. Hill Engineering Company and because of an analysis of that report conducted by students of the Department of Architecture at the University of Oregon (Lincoln Community School--The Building; Significance to the Community, Winter, 1975). These reports concur that "the building as it stands now is structurally sound and constitites no threat to the occupants." Repairs indicated in the reports would cost about $75,000, which compares to a replacement cost for the building of $1,750,000 (50,000 square feet @ $35.00 per square foot). Even if this estimate for repairs is doubled to include possible electrical and mechanical work or modernization of class areas, it still represents only eight and one-half percent of the replacement cost. The common "rule of thumb" nationally on the issue of school replacement has been that modernization instead of replacement is questionable if the cost of modernization exceeds fifty percent of the cost of a new project. Linn (1952) suggested that a forty percent figure would be more realistic. William Ensign, co-author of School Renewal (from Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1972) stated "I see justification in certain cases for spending one hundred percent of the cost of a new building for the old one."

Basil Castaldi (1969) has developed the most inclusive formula on this topic. It contrasts the annual rate of depreciation of adequate new and remodeled facilities:

If $\frac{(C_E+C_H+C_S)}{(L_M)(I_A)} < \frac{R}{L_R}$ then modernization is justifiable.

This is the meaning of the terms in the formula:

C_E = Total cost of educational improvements

C_H = Total cost for improvements in healthfulness (physical, esthetic, and psychological)

C_S = Total cost for improvements in safety

I_A = An index of educational adequacy ranging in value from 0-1 which is applied to the school for which modernization is being proposed. The value of the index is determined in relation to the educational adequacy of a replacement for the school in question. The index represents a professional judgment and is determined subjectively.

L_M = Estimated useful life of the modernized school

R = Cost of replacement of school considered for modernization

L_R = Estimated life of new building

Using this formula for Lincoln School, assuming a $150,000 cost of necessary improvements and using a 0.5 index of educational adequacy (supplied by Nick Maskal, Principal of Lincoln), we have:

$$\frac{\$150{,}000}{(30)(0.5)} < \frac{\$1{,}750{,}000}{50}$$

$10{,}000 < 35{,}000$ Therefore modernization is justifiable.

Even if the modernizing cost was doubled a second time and the estimated useful life of the remodeled building was cut to only twenty years, modernization would still be justifiable, according to this formula ($30{,}000 < 35{,}000$).

L_M and I_A would vary for other schools of course, but it seems reasonable to conclude that if closure of the school in the worst physical shape is not logical on those grounds, then closure of any of the other schools on those grounds is even less logical.

Note: Since the above calculations, considerable repair work has been accomplished at Lincoln including a complete new roof.

2 - Ben Graves (1972) developed a list of conditions for determining when a building has outlived its usefulness:

a - The building is not safe or cannot be brought up to safety standards.

(There are no known uncorrectable safety hazards in 4J elementary schools.)

b - New methods of teaching and new educational and behavioral objectives cannot be achieved in the remodeled facility.
(Quale (1975) comments that "to fashion a school after the educational goals of a district, however, can be tricky at best. Buildings tend to last longer than the fabled 20-year educational cycle, and the maligned "egg crate" school of yesterday might become the educational innovation of tomorrow." This issue of educational adequacy is examined in detail in the chapter on School Design.)

c - Shifting neighborhoods have removed the school-age population from the area, or projections show a decline in school population for the given area within the next few years.
(This issue is examined in the chapter on Population and Enrollment Trends.)

d - The school site is too small to meet current standards or a growing school population, and there is no way of adding to it. (Applied specifically to Lincoln School, its 4.437 acres is below the state standard which requires "five usable acres plus one usable acre for each 100 children or fraction thereof of the ultimate building capacity." By this standard, no school could now be built on this site. Since, however, no expansion of the school is contemplated and it has already performed adequately for fifty years, the site would appear to be limiting only if a new school were planned. Replacement of some other schools on their present sites would also be prohibited.)

3 - We believe that age of itself is not a valid criterion for abandonment of a school building. The Hill Engineering report on Lincoln School stated that the "building is fifty years old and has probably surpassed its planned life ... and money spent on major repairs would be ill-advised ..." This position is not supported by any of the Castaldi or Graves criteria or by this Task Force.

Newness once symbolized progress and oldness was suspect; but even casual observation of our man-made environment and of the news media indicates a reversal of opinion on this matter. We believe that many older buildings have desirable qualities often lacking in newer ones. Furthermore, the recent escalation of construction costs has made creative recycling of older structures an economical alternative to new construction.

Quale (1975) reports that "interest in the modernization of existing structures - as opposed to tearing down and building anew - has grown rapidly over the last five to ten years ... Although more construction money is still being spent for new structures, the scale is tipping dramatically toward the process which is variously called remodeling, renovating, or modernization ... the overriding reason in most cases is economic ... Modernization, therefore, seems to be the answer in the current tight money economy. It has the 'more bang for the buck' appeal which is essential today."

Ashley (1973) cites several factors that give cost advantage to a recycled building:

a - The land is already owned by the district.

b - Construction unknowns involving the site are eliminated.

c - Access roads and utilities are already in place.

d - The major part of the building already exists: excavation, foundations, structure, roof, deck, exterior walls, etc., plus contractor's overhead and profit on these items.

However many older buildings are not accessible to physically handicapped persons as is required for newer buildings. Remodeling to make this access possible usually involves expensive elevators and ramps.

4 - We believe that the few years of slack in the 4J elementary enrollment, which have been considered a problem so far, should also be recognized as a unique and important opportunity to accomplish renovation and modernization of school buildings with minimal disruption to the educational programs. Some programs in a building can be relocated to other vacant parts of that building to free a wing for construction work. An entire school program could be relocated to allow extensive work to proceed without the possible danger and conflict of rebuilding in an occupied building.

This Task Force has attempted to determine whether building conditions, structural or educational, would warrant school closings. We have found that they do not. That does not mean, however, that modernization and renovation are not desirable. Any principal can suggest projects which will repair portions of the school environment which do not presently fit program needs. This Task Force made no attempt to catalogue such projects, but we do believe that it is appropriate to initiate a program of physical improvement of the existing school facilities during the anticipated lower enrollment period.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOOL SIZE

Summary and Conclusions

The Task Force reviewed the literature relative to school size in order to determine if there was conclusive evidence of an ideal size for elementary school enrollment. The existing literature was analyzed and organized into four categories: 1) opinion surveys, 2) economic analysis, 3) achievement test results, and 4) behavioral and environmental research.

Opinion surveys indicated that educators consider an optimum elementary school size to be somewhere between 200 and 500 students.

Economic studies show that per pupil costs at schools of fewer than 300 students are higher than those at larger schools. However, some studies indicate that small schools can be operated as economically as large schools or that the difference in costs is very small. Comparisons of costs in District 4J support this conclusion.

Tests of educational achievement do not indicate any conclusive difference between small and large schools. However, behavioral studies tend to support smaller schools on the grounds that participation in the program of the school is encouraged when numbers are small.

On the basis of these studies described in this chapter and information gathered locally, the Task Force could find no clear evidence that a school of less than 150 is inferior to a larger one. Since the desirable qualities of participation, involvement, and responsiveness increase as size decreases, we conclude that a maximum elementary school size should lie near the bottom of the range which is usually considered optimum by the educators' opinions. Therefore, when it becomes necessary to build new schools a size of 200 to 350 students is most desirable.

Too often the prime criteria for closing smaller elementary schools are related primarily to economic or administrative factors. If the economic savings are achieved at the expense of the quality of education, the Task Force believes that it is a wiser decision to maintain small schools until criteria addressed in other chapters of this report are considered.

The four areas of research are summarized in more detail below.

1 - Opinion Surveys

Most studies related to school size fall into the opinion category. Conclusions are confusing and often contradictory.

> The usual research method employed is that of survey techniques. These include questionnaires and opinionnaires. A typical study of this type will survey a number of superintendents, asking them to indicate what they feel the optimum school size should be. From this response, the conclusions to be reported

> are drawn. It would seem that data of this type is not empirical enough to support policy decision making. (Andrews, 1974).

Opinion surveys usually state the importance of educational quality, but the actual findings appear to give greater weight to operating costs, efficient use of school plant, access to a wide range of specialists, and other administrative concerns. Andrews (1974) criticized 20 studies summarized by Fonstad (1973) which found that "School size ... is related to such factors as conduciveness to professional stimulation and flexibility, building and space economies, and business management of schools." Another study reported by Adams and Kimble in 1970 was concerned with such variables as discipline, control, and punishment. Principals interviewed in another report chose an optimum size based upon "...organizational flexibility, desirable staff differentiation, adequate budget for instructional materials, and adequate administrative and support services."[5]*

These surveys usually solicit the opinions of teachers and school administrators and do not reflect views held by parents or students. Thus, the surveys can be expected to reflect the biases and concerns of teachers and administrators. Nonetheless, the surveys are significant when viewed in relationship to other data.

Following is a summary of the enrollment range preferred for an elementary school:

Dawson (1934)[10] - 240 minimum
National Commission on School District Reorganizations (1948)[10] - 175 minimum (300 more desirable)
Department of Elementary School Principals, N.E.A. (1948)[15] - 800 recommended (400 minimum, 1,000 maximum)
Department of Elementary School Principals, N.E.A. (1954)[10] - 500 maximum
N.E.A. Survey (1949)[10] - 457
Nation's Schools Magazine (1954)[19] - 250 to 500
N.E.A. Survey (1961)[10] - 421
Sollars (1962)[10] - 300 to 499
Purdy (1968)[10] - 300 to 750 (500 optimum)
Whitt (1968)[10] - 300 to 500 minimum
Andrews (1974) - 300 to 700 (survey of school officials)
Maltby (1972) - 400 to 600 most acceptable
Andrews (1974) - 200 to 500 optimum (survey of literature)
Templeton (1972) - 300 to 800 (survey of literature)
Oakland Task Force (1973) - 200 maximum K-3, 450 maximum grades 4 & 5

State departments of education in California, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, and Washington, generally agree upon an optimum size of two or three sections per grade.[26]

Andrews (1974) concluded that a review of the literature

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*Superscript numbers in the text refer to bibliography items on pp. 66-7.

> ...suggests that when considering output measures, a range of 200 - 500 pupils was considered optimum. This contrasts to the 300 - 700 pupil range found most common in practice. Such discrepencies tend to indicate that school officials make optimum size decisions on an efficiency-of-operation basis rather than using quality of education as an output measure ...
>
> If the economic savings are achieved at the expense of the quality of education available to the students, it might be a wiser decision to maintain the elementary schools within a size range of 200 - 300 students.

An underlying reason for a minimum size of 300 students is that the students can then be conveniently divided into at least two classes per grade. Such division provides for some organizational and program choice. However, program choices are possible with much smaller total enrollment if grade levels are combined in some or all classes. Multi-grade classes are becoming more common in Eugene and elsewhere than they were a few years ago. Peter Coleman (1973), Director of Educational Services for the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, has presented models for organizing schools as small as 76 pupils so that organizational and program choices are still available. His proposals are based on teaching groups which disregard grade level distinction, allow for individualization of curricula, and rely on extensive teacher cooperation. Other experts have proposed even smaller optimum school sizes, such as those proposed for Christopher Alexander's shop front schools. Such options are interesting and worthy of note but little information is available on which to base any conclusions.

The Task Force did not conduct an opinion survey on optimum school size for District 4J. However, discussions at schools with less than 200 students and at public hearings indicated strong support for continued operation of smaller schools although concern was expressed about lack of supplies and a lower level of services at the smallest schools. Parents and teachers at Stella Magladry School, the District's smallest school building, seemed especially supportive of its 150 student enrollment.

2 - Economic Analysis

Economic concerns are obviously contained in the survey responses reviewed above, but some studies have separately analyzed the issue of school size and cost per pupil. The Montgomery County, Maryland, Small Schools Task Force (1973) reported that smaller schools cost more per pupil with the greatest difference occurring below 300 pupils. The District 4J Task Force also found that smaller 4J schools cost more per pupil per year to operate (see Economics Chapter) than larger schools.

Fonstad (1973) indicated that of twenty sources reviewed, one article indicated small schools (under 300 students) can be more cost effective, seventeen sources indicated that a school with 300+ students is more effective than a smaller school, and two studies indicated that school size is not important in relation to any meaningful factors. It is interesting to note that the word "effective," as it was used in the articles, related to factors other than the quality of education offered the students. (Summary by Andrews, 1974).

3 - Achievement Tests

The Task Force did not attempt to interpret achievement test scores in District 4J schools of various sizes because variables unrelated to school size make such an interpretation unreasonably complex.

Pierce and Mallory (1968) related student achievement scores to a selected list of variables and concluded that school size is not a factor in accounting for variance in scores. Michelson (1972) concluded that "An increase in size of school is detrimental to test scores, all else considered" although his data does not prove to be statistically significant according to Andrews (1974). Andrews concluded that

> It seems reasonably clear that there is little relationship between school size and students' scores on achievement tests. In addition, unless achievement test scores are used along with other measures of educational quality, they do not have much utility in determining the relationship between school size and quality education.

4 - Behavioral and Environmental Research

The relatively new field of environmental psychology is beginning to offer an approach to school size research which is not based on opinion survey. The early conclusions of such studies suggest smaller school sizes than those generally recommended in educator opinionnaires.

Several writers (Goffman, Bettleheim, Sommer) have approached the subject of an institution's size in ways which can be generalized to the school. They describe the impersonality and dehumanization which characterize large institutions and argue that small and intimate settings are more conducive to good mental health.

The impersonality of a school would seem to be linked to the number of other children that a typical child can know--at least by sight. The Oakland Task Force on School Buildings (1973) reported that this number varied from 50 for kindergarteners to 150 for sixth graders.

The classic in the literature of school size is the Barker and Gump work entitled Big School, Small School (1962) which relates school size to student behavior. The authors studied many Kansas high schools, with enrollment varying from 35 to 2,287 students, to see what effect the size has on the behavior of the individuals in the schools. Although a high school differs from an elementary school, their findings appear applicable since, as Alexander has observed, "...the ecological forces which Barker and his co-workers describe are so deep and so general..." that they would almost certainly apply beyond the high school setting. Relevance of this study to elementary schools is supported by Summers and Wolfe (1975).

Barker and Gump have shown that the health of a social system depends on the richness and variety of behavior settings. They found that although a big school contains a larger absolute number of behavior settings than a small school, the number of behavior settings available to any one individual is drastically less in the big schools than the small.

The following quotations from Big School, Small School are especially appropriate:

> Although there has been evidence from industrial psychology that the larger and more bureaucratically efficient the organization the greater the degradation of the individual, this knowledge has little influence upon schools, and the widespread concern for the organization man has not been accompanied by a similar concern for the organization child. On the contrary, the enlargement of schools has often been accepted not as an unfortunate necessity, but as a welcome educational improvement. This evaluation is usually based upon the assumption of a direct coupling between the properties of schools and the experiences and behavior of its children e.g., the assumption that a rich curriculum means rich experiences for students, or that a multiform program of activities means strong individual involvement. This simplex (sic.) view so common in education has been long passed in physical and biological sciences...
>
> If it is assumed that "the best way to learn is to do" or "the best way to learn responsibility is to have it," then the implications of the present study are clear. Individual students in small schools, with their relatively underpopulated settings, live under greater day-to-day attraction, pressure and responsibility felt toward taking active part in the voluntary activities of their school environments. They are more motivated to take part...
>
> Voluntary school behavior settings occupied a large place in the investigations because attendance and participation can be easily observed, and they are crucial indicators of motivation and involvement. In the case of school classes, on the other hand, where attendance and participation are required, methods of assessing motivation and involvement are very difficult...
>
> The educational process is a subtle and delicate one about which we know little; but it surely thrives upon participation, enthusiasm and responsibility. Without participation, education cannot occur however excellent the arrangements

> may be. All of our findings reveal a negative relation between school size and individual student participation. To the degree that this is true it means that when better facilities are purchased at the expense of larger size they are discounted by lower participation by students...
>
> Good facilities, varied course offerings, and a diversity of activities doubtless have educational values. However, our findings show that instructional variety (academic scope) enlarges very slowly with growth in size: schools differing in enrollment by 100 percent, had only a 17 percent median difference in instructional variety. Increasing school size would appear to be a relatively ineffective means of achieving richness and variety... Not only the present research, but all other research known to us, indicates that the negative relationship between institutional size and individual participation is deeply based and difficult, if not impossible, to avoid... It may be easier to bring specialized and varied behavior settings to small schools than to raise the level of individual participation in the large schools. Furthermore the current method of broadening educational offerings by moving hundreds of bodies to one central spot may be both unnecessary and old-fashioned...
>
> What seems to happen is that as schools get larger and settings inevitably become more heavily populated, more of the students are less needed; they become superflous, redundant. What size should a school be? The data of this research and our own educational values tell us that a school should be sufficiently small that all of its students are needed for its enterprises. A school should be small enough that students are not redundant...

Barker and Gump did not recommend an optimum school enrollment, but for high schools the qualities of participation, involvement, and responsibility which they measured continued to improve as school sizes decreased to an enrollment of about 60.

Summers and Wolfe (1975) in their analysis of the Philadelphia public schools concluded that smaller elementary schools promote the growth of academic achievement.

Turner and Thrasher (1970) wrote in School Size Does Make A Difference,

> Behavior patterns are different in large schools and students from small schools exhibit greater responsibility for self direction. Another product of the smaller school environment is that better cognitive

> processes are developed within the students because of the added meaning when students are actively involved and participating in the activities in and out of class.

Teachers as well as pupils are affected by school size. Gentry and Kenney (1967) reported that as elementary schools increase in size large faculty groups break down into smaller informal groups which perceive parts rather than wholes of over-all school goals. "The individual, in essence, becomes an isolate from the affairs of the school and in turn develops an attitude of indifference to all factors except his own immediate environment and work." In a related study Flagg (1964) found that a "closed climate tends to increase the rate of teacher turnover." In a study involving elementary school teachers and principals in the midwest, Bridges (1964) reported that teacher participation in decision making was greater in small schools (12-19 teachers) than in large schools (20-32 teachers). A staff of 12-19 teachers would correspond to an enrollment of 300 to 475 students. The conclusion of Bridges' study

> ...suggests that size is a relevant consideration even for sub-units within large organizations (school/school district). This along with the relationships between participation and satisfaction, would point to the increasing alienation of the worker as a function of the size of the organization within which he works and the size of the sub-unit within which his work is organized.

Finally, McPartland and McDill (1975) studied the correlation between school size and student behavior.

> We know from research on school size that it can affect the costs of misbehavior, because all behavior is more visible in smaller schools and naturally subject to greater control. In small schools, where few individuals are anonymous, it is harder to avoid being recognized for possible misdeeds. Higher visibility and closer personal associations in smaller schools also may affect the rewards side of school responsiveness, because the pressures and incentives are greater to become involved in and committed to school activities...
>
> A student with greater integration into the life of the school is generally believed to find school more rewarding in terms of informal relations and feelings of self-worth through responsibility. Also, smaller schools may be expected to provide some ease of student access--the third aspect of responsiveness--because the bureaucratic structure that can impede responses to student requests need not be as cumbersome as in larger schools. Thus size provides a rough indicator of general school responsiveness to be used in a final assessment of the unique role of schools in student crime.

All of the environmental and behavioral research known to this Task Force favors smaller schools.

CHAPTER SIX

SCHOOL DESIGN

While the Task Force believes that age of itself is not a valid criterion for abandonment of a school building, we questioned whether traditional architectural characteristics of some of the older schools made them less supportive of educational quality than newer schools.

The most significant architectural difference between older and most newer schools is the presence of open space instead of self-contained classrooms; the research on open-plan schools is summarized below. If open-plan spaces were clearly superior to self-contained classrooms, this could have a significant impact on decisions to retain older school buildings. Research, however, indicates that there is no demonstrated superiority to open-plan schools.

"Open education" classrooms and open-plan spaces have often been erroneously equated. Open plan or open space refers to an architectural arrangement which may or may not be conducive to open education. Two educators, Martin and Pavan, made an extensive review of the research on this issue and published a summary in the Janaury 1976 Phi Delta Kappan magazine. The issues investigated in this research included organizational climate, teacher attitude, achievement, self-concept, educational practices, and others. Martin and Pavan concluded that

> The studies as a whole do not find that open space school organization promotes any real differences in learning and teaching outcomes. Innovative programs of all types can exist within old buildings originally intended for traditional classrooms, and it seems evident that changes in architecture do not, in and of themselves, make a great difference.

Additional research reviewed by this Task Force and listed in the Bibliography does not alter these conclusions.

Experience with open education informal techniques in England also confirms these findings. Featherstone reported that these techniques were developed and operated comfortably in England's old egg-crate type schools that had been designed for a totally different type of program. Evans (1974) concluded that "the old central hall plan schools seemed as amenable to informal adaptions as any."

Locally, this Task Force did not find any major conflict between traditional architectural spaces and innovative programs at Lincoln/Action High School, Condon/Magnet Arts, and Edison/Eastside. It has not been convincingly demonstrated that the traditional plans of older school buildings are inferior educationally to newer, more fashionable, open spaces. If anything, studies seem to favor the more architecturally traditional class spaces. We agree, however, with the basic notion that people should have options in their physical environments for achieving community and privacy (Proshansky; Alexander and Chermoyeff) and schools which offer a variety of places and programs supportive of these options seem to be superior to schools with fewer opportunities. Nevertheless, this variety is not dependent upon open space, and schools which lack these spatial options can be improved through inexpensive lofts, room dividers, and levels. (See Taylor and Vlastos, Van der Ryn).

The Task Force concludes that a lack of open space is not a valid criterion for school closure.

With the exception of studies of open spaces, the Task Force found little significant literature on other qualities which have been fashionable in school architecture in recent years. Windowless classrooms have been popular in some newer schools, but Alexander reported negative psychological and physiological effects of windowless buildings. Most older schools are small compact masses or are arranged in wings or around courts to take advantage of natural light and ventilation. Many newer schools, on the other hand, are large compact masses whose lighting and ventilation are made possible by complex electrical/mechanical systems. Philip Slater and others have argued that our heavy reliance upon technology instead of natural systems is a principal cause of the alienation of contemporary society. Recent energy shortages reinforce this importance of natural systems. While these observations are interesting in themselves, their primary importance here is in reconfirming that newer schools do not necessarily have more desirable characteristics.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

General Findings

Closure of any school would require additional bussing. However, such an eventuality would conflict with a recommendation from Eugene's 1974 Community Goals and Guidelines proposing that the City and the School District work toward the objective of minimizing the need of bussing elementary school children.

Closure or relocation of a school might seriously affect the present role of the school as a community or neighborhood center. This would be at variance with the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan 1990 Plan in which it is recognized that the elementary school represents the central feature of most residential neighborhoods and a lack of such facilities can as much as anything else reduce the livability of an area. Even though closure of a school might not necessarily eliminate the building as a center for community activities, the Task Force believes that the school's effectiveness as a community center could be considerably diminished.

The public, through hearings, questionnaires and citizen meetings testified nearly unanimously against the closure of any school.

Bussing and Possible School Closure

Of the nine small enrollment schools, eight have some students who are bussed. Closure of any of these schools would necessitate boundary changes, extension of existing bus routes and in several cases, additional bus service. The circumstances would vary with each school and little is to be gained in identifying specific changes at this time. However, the Task Force believes the following questions should be seriously considered.

1 - How far should a child of elementary school age have to travel to school?

2 - What are the consequences, if any, of bussing a child from his home area to a school outside his neighborhood?

3 - In proposing additional bussing, can the district justify a recommendation which conflicts with stated community policy?

4 - How much changing of boundaries and regrouping of schools will be tolerated by parents residing within the various neighborhood areas?

Adopted Community Plans and Fiscal Programs as Related to Closure

The Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan 1990 Plan and the 1974 Eugene Community Goals and Policies serve as guides for decisions pertaining to land use, proposed development, and the provision for and extension of public services and facilities, including public schools. The School Board adopted the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan 1990 Plan in 1973.

The Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan 1990 Plan recognizes the crucial role the schools play in maintaining the vitality of inner city neighborhoods. This is evident in the following statements:

> Control of the location, timing and financing of the major public investments that directly influence the growth form of the metropolitan area must be authorized on a metropolitan-wide basis. At the least, this should include control over school type locations... (p. 23)
>
> The planning, programming and financing for the provision of all urban services should then be concentrated inside the urban service area.* (p. 23)
>
> Elementary schools represent the central feature of most residential neighborhoods and a lack of such facilities can, as much as anything else, reduce the livability of an area. (p. 48)
>
> Public schools should be located so as to encourage compact urban development, including locations in the core area. (p. 51)

In Eugene Community Goals and Policies 1974 it is stated that:

> The School District and the City should be working toward the objective of eliminating the need of bussing elementary school children, by such means as the use of public transportation, redistricting and the construction of sidewalks. (p. 26)

The Task Force must conclude that closure of any central city school would seriously erode, if not completely nullify, the City's efforts to accomplish the objectives specified by the federal government in conjunction with Community Development Funding.

The Community Development Act, as adopted by Congress in 1974, modified the way in which cities in the United States receive assistance from the Federal government. Under the Community Development Act, cities continue to receive funding grants. However, greater discretion concerning the expenditure of these funds is left to local units of government as long as they act within the guidelines provided by the Act.

Simply stated, the primary objectives of the Community Development Act are:

> To provide decent housing and a suitable living environment, expecially for low and moderate income households, and

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*Urban growth boundaries are now required in the Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission and operative as of January 1, 1975.

To expand economic opportunity.

Some of the more specific objectives include:

1 - Elimination of slums and blight,

2 - Expansion of the housing supply,

3 - Revitalization of neighborhoods.

Following clear direction expressed through extensive city-wide citizen input through public hearings, response from neighborhood associations, and newspaper questionnaires, the City Council allocated approximately 70% of the 1975 appropriation of $912,000 to projects and programs in the central area. This area includes all of the Lincoln and Whiteaker attendance areas as well as a sizeable portion of the Patterson area and a small part of the Condon attendance area. First year projects and programs of special interest to small school attendance area residents are as follows:

1 - Housing Rehabilitation. $536,000 was allocated for programs in neighborhood rehabilitation and to establish neighborhood tool libraries. About 64% is to be spent in the Condon, Whiteaker, Lincoln, Patterson, Adams, and Laurel Hill attendance areas.

2 - Open Space and Park Development. $44,300 of the first year's funds was allocated for open space acquisition and park development in the Lincoln area. In addition, $19,200 was designated for acquisition in the south hills, which includes the Magladry School area, and $6,500 for expansion of Monroe Park in the Lincoln area.

3 - Neighborhood Centers. Existing neighborhood facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of existing and projected population. Accordingly, $45,500 was allocated to three central district neighborhoods for development of community centers. Two of these will take place in conjunction with the Whiteaker ($22,800) and Lincoln ($13,700) Community Schools. The third will be in an as yet undetermined site in the West University Neighborhood ($9,000) which includes the Lincoln School attendance area.

4 - Public Works Projects. $50,700 was allocated to the Lincoln and Whiteaker School neighborhoods for bicycle paths and street screening, $14,400 for similar uses in the Edison neighborhood, $14,400 for street improvements and screening in the Laurel Hill Valley.

5 - Historic Preservation. $12,000 was allocated to an historic preservation program for the central area which includes the Whiteaker, Lincoln, and Patterson School attendance areas as well as a small portion of the Condon School attendance area.

6 - Neighborhood Improvement Program Planning. The central city has been identified as an area in need of a wide variety of

programs to prevent deterioration of the area. Therefore, $67,500 has been allocated for the planning of a neighborhood improvement program in the central city which includes the Lincoln and Patterson School attendance areas. The neighborhood improvement program approach will identify the needs of the area that can be served through the expenditure of Community Development funds on a coordinated package of activities.

7 - Social Service - Although no specific amount of funding was set aside for social service activities, it is recognized that social needs assessment will have to be part of the neighborhood improvement program discussed above. Social services will have to be funded out of the allocation for community centers and the neighborhood improvement program. The city will contract with the county to conduct a social service needs study in the Lincoln and Patterson school areas this year.

Housing Site Acquisition

In addition to the above Community Development funded activities and programs, $60,000 was set aside from Federal Revenue Sharing monies received by the City for the acquisition of housing sites for small and low-cost housing projects. Laurel Hill and the Crest Drive areas (which includes Magladry School) are the primary target areas.

In fiscal 1976-77, Eugene will receive an additional $1,009,000 in Community Development funds. Following established guidelines, it is reasonable to anticipate that the central area will again receive the lion's share, some $605,400 to $706,300, or 60 to 70%. In fact, it has already been established that $135,573 will be spent in the Lincoln School building and on the surrounding playground to enhance their use as a community school.

Community Use of Small Schools

Groups of all kinds regularly use school facilities for meetings, sports, and special educational activities. Many of these groups pay a fee according to a schedule established by the District. Condon, Edison, Fox Hollow, Harris, Lincoln, and Magladry Schools all reported paid use of their facilities in 1974-75. Appendix I, included to give an idea of the range of activities carried on in elementary schools, lists a variety of groups who used school buildings during that period. The recent development of the Community School program has further enhanced the use of school buildings by the community. Programs developed by the community schools are intended to reach all neighborhood residents from young children to senior citizens. Appendix II categorizes the activities at Lincoln Community School as one example of these new programs.

The advent of neighborhood organizations has increased the importance of the school as a convenient and appropriate meeting place. Several of the thirteen existing neighborhood associations regularly meet in schools.

Public Response to the Proposed Closure of Schools

The Task Force sought the opinion of the public at two hearings held in November, 1975. Approximately 120 attended the first hearing at South Eugene High School and approximately 100 attended the second held in the Administration Building. There was no testimony at either hearing from any proponent of closure. A variety of arguments were offered in support of maintaining all schools. Individuals supported Lincoln, Magladry, Edison, Condon, Harris, Laurel Hill, Whiteaker, and Coburg Schools. In addition, the West Side Neighborhood Quality Project, the South University Neighborhood Association, and the League of Women Voters gave their approval to the preliminary recommendations of the Task Force.

A deep commitment to the philosophy of small schools and an equally firm belief in the philosophy of the interdependence of school and neighborhood were expressed. Speakers frequently testified in support of the educational advantages of the small school, the school as the center of neighborhood identity, and the school's essential role in combating urban deterioriation. Specific comments from people who attended the hearings are included in Appendix III.

Those who attended the hearings were asked to reply to a questionnaire seeking specific recommendations and opinions. Responses overwhelmingly favored retaining the small schools and included several suggestions for expanded community uses of portions of buildings. A summary tabulation of responses is presented in Appendix IV of this chapter. The letter in Appendix V embodies the spirit of respondents in reference to inner city neighborhoods.

Impact of School Closure in Other Communities

Other school districts in the United States have experienced the problem of declining school populations and attempted to solve their problem by the closure of one or more schools. Richard L. Andrews and two associates in the Bureau of School Service and Research at the University of Washington have recently completed a study entitled, The Environmental Impact of School Closure. They sought data related to the impact on neighborhoods when schools are closed as a part of their study. Although they stated that only four districts had conducted formal evaluations of the impact of school closure, they did receive comments from school officials in various systems. The table on the following pages briefly summarizes the responses Andrews received. The Task Force believes that the School Board should consider their conclusions carefully when deciding on school closure. For example, they state that:

> It is apparent that school districts faced with declining enrollments have chosen one solution: closure of elementary schools. The closure of elementary schools, however, is an exceedingly complex issue, having extensive and pervasive ramifications in virtually all aspects of urban life. Once an elementary school is closed, the environmental forces of out-migration, population decline and neighborhood deterioration

> are set in motion. It is difficult--if not impossible--to reverse these forces.

Conclusion

It is clear to the Task Force that closure of any school would seriously disrupt the texture of neighborhood life at all levels. The Task Force believes that schools serve as a vital center for community activities. This belief is reinforced by the City Council in their decision to use Federal Community Development funds to stabilize inner city neighborhoods. Finally, reaction from the principals of the nine smallest enrollment schools and testimony from community residents at the two public hearings lead the Task Force to conclude that neighborhood reaction to closure of a school would be intense and well organized. These conclusions tend to be supported by the study of school closures in other cities.

TABLE ONE

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS COMMENTS ON IMPACT OF CLOSURES

District	Results
1 - Madison, WI	School next to University of Wisconsin was closed. Population at closure: 640, current student population in area: 40 students. Area in general has deteriorated; there has been a reduction of single family dwellings.
2 - Phoenix, AZ	Schools in transitional areas were closed--the closing of the schools and transfer of the students has accelerated the process.
3 - Salt Lake City, UT	Closing of schools has accelerated the out-migration of young families. Superintendent was fired during the closure process.
8 - Atlanta, GA	"I have noticed no dramatic changes which were not already in process, they are just continuing to happen."
9 - Great Falls, MT	Had no impact.
*15 - Charlotte, NC	Crime rate increased in areas where schools were closed, people moved out, neighborhoods degenerated. Beginning to build new schools in those areas.
17 - Freeport, NY	Reduction in public support, there are fewer children now in that neighborhood, much deterioration in that area.
19 - Sampson County, NC	Area has increasingly lost population.
*20 - Wichita, KS	Enrollment continued to decline in the areas where schools were closed. Three downtown schools were consolidated into one: enrollment before consolidation 450; in three years it has declined to 225. Other than this area, the school official could see little impact.
22 - Minneapolis, MN	Extraction of schools in core area would be too devastating on vitality of the city and integration. Therefore, the school district is building new schools in the core area.
*25 - Arlington, VA	Young families have done more selective house buying since the closures. Such activities have caused a 10% to 20% drop in property values in those areas. Because of this, we are very reluctant to close out schools.

District	Results
26 - Columbia, SC	Extraction of the school moved the land toward commercial usage and away from residential.
27 - Palo Alto, CA	Loss in school support--people are bitter.
28 - Lansing, MI	"No need to do a formal evaluation." The neighborhood disappeared due to industrial expansion after the school was closed.
29 - Pittsburgh, PA	See no changes, because the neighborhood was already no longer viable.
*30 - Los Angeles, CA	Closure had a definite negative effect upon these areas. We now have a policy that closure is a last resort after everything else has been tried.
39 - Eau Claire, WI	Closure had a positive impact as the school was isolated from the community it served. We are working hard to get the second ring around the downtown area to have very good schools.
46 - Abbeville, GA	The smaller communities have been destroyed. These people also no longer support the schools.
47 - Birmingham, MI	No changes observed.

*Indicates districts conducting formal evaluations.

Source: R. L. Andrews et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROGRAM CAPACITY

A study of the capacities of Eugene's elementary schools was recently completed by the Division of Research, Development, and Evaluation. Four capacities were developed for each school, two of which are particularly important to those considering school closure. The School Capacity and Utilization report defines Program Capacity as, "the maximum number of students that a building can facilitate with special consideration given to education programs that have a reduced capacity because of state requirements, Board policy, or previously negotiated agreements." This has been used throughout the Task Force report for school capacity. (See Table One and Two).

A second term, Optimum Capacity, is defined as, "the maximum number of students who could be accommodated in a relatively rigid educational program over an extended period of time." The major difference between the two figures is that optimum capacities are based on a limit of 30 students per classroom and program capacities on a limit of 25 students. Optimum capacity also disregards any special classes with greater space requirements than usual and assumes that every classroom in the school will house 30 students.

Although the Task Force recognizes the capacity study as an important step in the evaluation of enrollment patterns, we are concerned that the program capacity figures in particular are too high. This is a significant issue, because the question of extra space and school closure is directly related to the capacity numbers which are used. The District 4J official numbers indicate that there are 1,776 extra student places. Using reasonable other criteria this surplus capacity would be considerably reduced.

There are four areas which should be considered for revision:

1 - Program capacity for kindergarten classrooms should be decreased.

In the capacity study, kindergarten classes are assigned the same capacity as other elementary school classes (30 square feet per pupil). This policy is consistent with Oregon law, but inconsistent with standards used in most other states. Twenty-eight other states that recommend area standards replied to a Task Force survey and only two states (Georgia and Kentucky) did not recommend larger areas for kindergartens. Except for North Dakota, all the surveyed states with kindergarten area standards per pupil recommended more than District 4J's 30 square feet per pupil. Four states, including neighboring California and Nevada recommended 50 square feet per pupil, and Minnesota and New Hampshire recommended up to 60. Castaldi (Creative Planning of Educational Facilities, 1969) recommended 55 to 65 square feet per kindergartner.

2 - The Program Capacity figure should account for a reasonable amount of ancillary space in each school. Some of the schools which have less ancillary space than the district average could have one or more classrooms rated for nonclassroom use.

The capacity study identifies ancillary space in each school, including faculty planning areas, instructional materials centers, libraries, counseling and guidance centers, cafeterias, gymnasiums, and other spaces having great significance to a school's program. The amount of this space available per student varies greatly from school to school. Fox Hollow is now operating at 120 percent of program capacity with relative ease because it has a large amount of nonclassroom space. Spring Creek, however, which is not exceeding its program capacity is so crowded that the speech therapist must operate amidst the mops and brooms of a custodian's closet. Even if the conversion of classrooms to ancillary spaces on paper does not make a single classroom really available for such use, a revision in Program Capacity would at least identify the actual overcrowding.

3 - Adjustments should be made in the program capacity for those schools which have Title I programs. According to Dr. Aubrey Trimble, Title I specialist, such programs require more space.

4 - Program capacities for small classrooms should be decreased.

Capacity calculations are based on a series of minimums and ratios. Optimum figures adhere strictly to state minimum standards of 30 students per class with each student allotted 30 square feet of space. Thus the minimum standard size classroom becomes 900 square feet. District 4J's program capacity allots 25 students to most classrooms, regardless of size. Therefore, students in a standard classroom are allotted 36 square feet while those in a classroom of 750 square feet have only 30 square feet each. By the District's own definition, that is the optimum allotment, which "requires a relatively rigid program." This double standard especially penalizes schools like Edison and Spring Creek where all classrooms are small.

	Optimum Capacity	Program Capacity
Edison	328	328
Spring Creek	510	505
For comparison:		
Adams	540	450
McCornack	409	344

If the intent of the program capacity is to work toward equity among students and to provide reasonable space for all, capacities should be adjusted to reflect actual room size.

A preliminary analysis of the effects of using new criteria based upon items 1, 2, and 4 above was done by a committee of the Task Force and resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of empty pupil spaces. One clear result of the revision was that North Region elementary schools are even more crowded than was assumed. A copy of this analysis and responses to it are on file in the District 4J office for anyone wishing to study this issue.

The following are comments from some of the replies to this proposal. Doug Parrish of District 4J Research, Development, and Evaluation defends the use of the more crowded optimum capacity level for schools with smaller classrooms and believes that this level does "not necessitate a rigid educational program" although this is clearly stated in the definition of Optimum Capacity. He also believes that the transfer of classroom space to nonclassroom uses in schools which are also short of classroom space would "create more problems than it would solve." He believes that nonclassroom space in schools with more than an average amount of this space could be converted to classroom space to raise the building capacity.

Nine principals responded. The Principal of the District's smallest school believed that the current Program Capacity was comfortable and that the proposed revision downward was unnecessary. The eight other principals were at least generally supportive of the proposed revisions. One large school principal responded that the District's staffing plan provided him with all the specialists he needed plus one and a half more classroom teachers than he had classrooms for. He continued "Your study supports the position held by the North Area Administrators that all the schools in the North Area are overcrowded and lack adequate ancillary space. A new elementary school in the North Area is truly an immediate need." The principal of the school which would be most affected by these proposals because of very limited ancillary space and small classrooms replied that "the whole concept of equal educational opportunity comes into question if our instructional and ancillary spaces are not enlarged or our enrollment reduced." She related the difficulties of bussing, building more schools, etc. and concluded, "please consider that with the allocation of certain additional, reasonable personnel and material resources the educational opportunities...could be made more compatible to the District norm." She suggests the addition of such items as portable space and more staff.

Finally it is important to realize that even using District 4J program capacity numbers, the number of extra pupil spaces does not necessarily relate to the number of extra rooms in a school. The Task Force surveyed the eleven schools whose enrollment was below 85% of District 4J program capacity. These schools had 1,354 extra pupil spaces, 3/4 of the District's total. There were 32 classrooms not being used for uses to which program capacity is usually assigned, but all but three of these were in use to enrich educational programs. Uses included music, reading, math lab, instructional materials center, and the Teacher Center. Two of the three rooms not in active use to support the educational program were at Laurel Hill. One was used for storage and the other was used as a community room, since Laurel Hill is a Community School. Ida Patterson School, which is also a community school, had the third "extra" space. It was used for a nursery co-op in the morning and a community room the rest of the day.

The Task Force recommends that the Capacity Study be reexamined in light of the suggestions made in this chapter.

TABLE ONE

EXTRA PUPIL SPACES
(Using 4J Program Capacity Figures)

Elementary School	4J Program Capacity Including Portable & Temporary Space	Sept, 30, 1975 Enrollment Including All Programs*	Extra Pupil Spaces	Percent Of 4J Program Capacity
Adams	450	253	197	56
Awbrey Park	625	625	0	100
Bailey Hill	383	410	- 27	107
Coburg	225	207	18	92
Condon/Magnet Arts	315	267	48	85
Crest Drive	250	255	- 5	102
Dunn	373	265	108	71
Edgewood/Evergreen	475	424	51	89
Edison/Eastside	328	315	13	96
Fox Hollow	184	220	- 36	120
Gilham	325	312	13	96
Harris	356	246	110	69
Howard	566	492	74	87
Laurel Hill	250	129	121	52
Lincoln/Action High	311	294**	17	95
McCornack	344	341	3	99
Magladry	150	137	13	91
Meadow Lark	550	392	158	71
Parker	425	287	138	68
Patterson	400	264	136	66
River Road/Environmental Outdoor	543	486	57	90
Santa Clara	468	423	45	90
Silver Lea	496	429	67	86
Spring Creek	505	502	3	99
Twin Oaks	300	245	55	82
Washington	497	441	56	89
Westmoreland	400	441	- 41	110
Whiteaker	313	198	115	63
Willagillespie	375	322	53	86
Willakenzie	416	282	134	68
Willard	401	319	82	80
TOTALS	11,999	10,223**	1,776	85**

* Kindergartens meet half days so one room can serve two classes daily. The above enrollment figures include the maximum number of kindergartners present at one time.

**Includes 109 Action High School pupils.

TABLE TWO: ADJUSTMENT TO TABLE ONE TO SHOW DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENT ATTENDANCE AREAS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
			MINUS				PLUS							
Elementary School	4J Prog.Cap. Including Port.& Temp. Space	9-30-75 Enroll. Inc.All Progs.	1/2 Kindergartners Attending Here From Outside This Area	Special Programs EMR,THR,Deaf, Action H.S. etc.	Students Attending Alt.School From Outside This Attend. Area	Superintendent's Transfers	1/2 Kindergartners Attending Outside This Area	Students Attending Special Programs (col. 4) Elsewhere in 4J	Students Attending Alt. Sch. Elsewhere in 4J	Superintendent's Transfers	Enroll.Adj. for Resis. Attendance Areas(col. 2-3,4,5, + 7 & 9)	Extra Pupil Spaces in Attend. Areas	% of 4J Program Capacity Tab. Two	Tab. One
Adams	450	253	0	0	0	UNAVAILABLE	0	UNAVAILABLE	7	UNAVAILABLE	260	190	58	56
Awbrey Park	625	625	0	0	0		34 Riv.Rd.		6		665	- 40	106	100
Bailey Hill	383	410	-22 McCorn.	0	0		0		0		388	- 5	101	107
Coburg	225	207	0	0	0		0		0		207	18	92	92
Condon/M.A.	315	267	0	- 13	-96		0		24		182	133	58	85
Crest Drive	250	255	- 9 Magladry	0	0		0		0		246	4	98	102
Dunn	373	265	0	- 21	0		0		6		250	123	67	71
Edgewood/Ever.	475	424	0	0	- 5		0		13		432	43	91	89
Edison/East.	328	315	0	0	-66		0		28		277	51	84	96
Fox Hollow	184	220	0	0	0		0		9		229	- 45	124	120
Gilham	325	312	0	0	0		26 Willag.		4		342	- 17	105	96
Harris	356	246	0	- 21	0		0		9		234	122	66	69
Howard	566	492	0	0	0		0		4		496	70	88	87
Laurel Hill	250	129	0	0	0		0		15		144	106	58	52
Lincoln/Action	311	294	0	-113	0		0		18		199	112	64	95
McCornack	344	341	0	0	0		22 B.Hill		2		365	- 21	106	99
Magladry	150	137	0	0	0		17* C.Drive		0		154	- 4	103	91
Meadow Lark	550	392	0	0	0		0		0		392	158	71	71
Parker	425	287	0	- 18	0		0		13		282	143	66	68
Patterson	400	264	0	- 7	0		0		6		263	137	66	66
River Rd./Env.	543	486	-34 A.Park	- 5	-30		0		1		418	125	77	90
Santa Clara	468	423	0	0	0		7 S.Lea		6		436	32	93	90
Silver Lea	496	429	- 7 S.Clara	0	0		0		3		425	71	86	86
Spring Creek	505	502	0	0	0		0		1		503	2	99	99
Twin Oaks	300	245	0	0	0		0		3		248	52	83	82
Washington	497	441	0	0	0		0		4		445	52	90	89
Westmoreland	400	441	0	0	0		0		5		446	- 46	112	110
Whiteaker	313	198	0	0	0		0		2		200	113	64	63
Willagillespie	375	322	-26 Gilham	0	0		0		0		296	79	79	86
Willakenzie	416	282	0	- 13	0		0		1		270	146	65	68
Willard	401	319	0	- 9	0		0		7		317	84	79	80
TOTALS	11,999	10,223	-98	-220 **	-197		106	111**	197		10,011	1,988	84	85
				(inc.109 Act.H.S.)						Column 8	+ 111**	- 111	Most significant changes underlined	
											10,122	1,877		

*This is all the displaced Magladry kindergartners (not 50%) (see note on table one)

**111 elementary students in special programs are not included in column 11 because their residence area was not available

CHAPTER NINE

STAFFING

The District's new staffing plan assigns staff on a per pupil ratio rather than by program. This has reduced the staff at smaller schools and correspondingly reduced the higher cost per pupil cost at these smaller schools. Some teachers and staff have reported that additional staff are needed to maintain services and programs in small schools which are comparable in scope to larger schools. The Task Force is not convinced of this need. We are sympathetic to the idea that the resources of the District should be distributed as equitably as is reasonable and agree that a per pupil formula is one way to achieve an equitable staff distribution. We are aware that this plan requires that smaller schools develop a staff of people with a diversity of talents, and we recommend that current policies for filling staff vacancies in smaller schools be revised if necessary to insure that a diverse, multi-talented staff can be realized. It seems that in 1975-76, at least, each small school has been able to develop a staff which provides a reasonably balanced program for its pupils.

The Task Force believes in the importance of neighborhood schools and in the advantages of the more personal atmosphere of smaller schools. We strongly recommend the retention of these smaller neighborhood schools even if funds are not available to correct staffing deficiencies which might exist. The Task Force believes, in other words, that small neighborhood schools have so many advantages that we believe that it is reasonable to maintain them even with some minor disadvantages in other areas.

The Task Force also believes that the present staffing plan has not been in effect long enough to allow for full evaluation of its success or failure. We recommend that the staffing plan operate for two years and then be evaluated. Attention should be given to the effect of the plan on smaller schools.

The Task Force does recommend immediate rescinding of that part of the plan which arbitrarily reduces the staffing level of the four smallest schools by 0.5 FTE and increases the level of the four largest schools a corresponding amount. Lincoln School in particular is unreasonably penalized; its enrollment, including alternative school and special programs, is well over the size of the four smallest enrollment schools.

The Task Force is concerned that the removal of 0.5 position from the four smallest schools has made a diversified program more difficult to achieve. The demands upon a principal's time do not vary in direct proportion to a school's size, since meetings, reports, curriculum guidance, etc. require nearly as much time from a small school principal as from a large school principal. The Task Force recommends that full-time principals be assigned to the four schools which now have 0.5 FTE principals.

The Task Force believes that there must be a minimal school size which could be administered on a part-time basis. This size would vary depending upon the character and diversity of the school's programs.

This issue should be considered by the committee formed to evaluate a particular low enrollment school when its enrollment drops below 75% of Program Capacity. (See Chapter Eleven, Criteria for Evaluation of Low Enrollment Schools). In any event, sharing of a principal by more than one school is not recommended.

CHAPTER TEN

ALTERNATIVES IN PERSONNEL, SUPPORT PROGRAMS, AND FACILITIES

District 4J is not alone in its efforts to make economical use of its buildings both as educational and community centers. The Table at the end of this chapter summarizes the disposition of 185 schools that have been closed in 49 communities throughout the nation. The Task Force received correspondence from such diverse school districts as Arlington, Virginia; Columbia, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Chula Vista, California; Madison, Wisconsin; Los Angeles, California; and Montgomery County, Maryland. In addition, the Task Force reviewed numerous publications related to school closure and alternatives to closure. Each of these reports stressed the importance of involving the community in closure decisions and of allowing ample time to reach those decisions.

Joseph Ringer, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Building Management in Arlington, Virginia, summarized the spirit in which the Task Force discussed District 4J's low enrollment schools:

> Schools, after all, are more than educational institutions. They are community property and we in the school district must take the lead in finding ways in which our buildings can best serve their communities.*

As a result of our evaluation of experiences in other communities, the Task Force recommends that the following seven successive steps should be taken in making decisions regarding alternative programs for school facilities.

1 - Determine how much nonclassroom space is necessary for the effective operation of an elementary school.

The Task Force believes that each school needs space to house the specialists that it employs: reading teachers, physical education teachers, counselors, music teachers. Those school which now have such space should not be classified as "underused." Instead, the District should determine how much space is needed for these specialists and then find a means to make it available in all schools.

2 - Evaluate the present use of portable buildings in the District.

For example, if there are portable classrooms in the South or Churchill areas which can be released to provide added space in the North area, these facilities should be moved. The portable buildings should be used to increase nonclassroom space at the River Road area schools if this is possible. Need for additional classroom space should not be met in this way.

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*Educational Facilities Laboratories Newsletter, No. 21 Schoolhouse, September 1975.

3 - Revise existing elementary school attendance area boundaries to balance enrollment.

The Task Force identified three areas in which boundary changes might solve some problems:

First, Bailey Hill, Crest Drive, Westmoreland, and McCornack Schools are operating near 100% of capacity. Nearby Adams and Patterson Schools are at less than 70% of capacity. The District should determine whether it is economically feasible to relocate some students to achieve a better balance among these schools and if such a move would be acceptable to those involved.

Second, with the exceptions of Whiteaker and River Road Elementary Schools, the River Road-Santa Clara area schools are all crowded. Moving each school boundary to the north should relieve the pressure somewhat by increasing enrollments at Whiteaker and River Road. The Task Force is aware that this recommendation poses a number of problems, among them the fact that traffic in this area makes walking hazardous.

Third, Fox Hollow School is currently operating at 120% of capacity while both Edgewood and Ellis Parker Schools are less crowded. Small boundary changes in this area should relieve crowding and allow space for newcomers as the population of the area grows. Such boundary changes seem possible without creating a need for bussing children who now walk.

4 - Evaluate present educational programs and the distribution of special programs among district buildings. Look both at educational benefits and economic impact.

There is current interest in the middle school concept locally. Grouping of grades five, six, and seven or of six, seven, and eight could be tried in a wing of an uncrowded school, thus relieving pressure on crowded elementary and junior high schools. We understand that such an arrangement is currently under consideration at three junior high schools.

The institution of a program for gifted children is often undertaken by districts with extra space (EFL,1974). District 4J might begin consideration of a program for gifted fifth and sixth graders with one such program in each region.

The consolidation of special education classes into one school in each region could be considered. However, the Task Force believes that once such classes are assigned to a building, they should not be moved again soon. These children need the same stability of school environment as that given neighborhood children. Special education programs should not be squeezed in wherever they happen to fit.

The impact of Title I programs and any other special programs currently underway in the District should be considered when determining capacity of the building.

5 - If enrollment falls below 120 to 150 students, try innovative plans of grouping students and allocating personnel.

The current system of dividing children into self-contained classrooms of at most two grades and supplying specialists to provide expertise and variety to the curriculum works well as long as a school has 150 or more children. In our opinion, it is difficult to achieve flexibility, diversity of program or equity of teacher work-load if the number falls much below 150. However, if the notion that students must be divided by age is discarded, several other alternatives become possible. One such alternative is described by Peter Coleman in School Division Planning in an Era of Declining Enrollments. He suggested dividing the school into two groups: first and second graders as one group and all other classes as one unit. The children are divided into classes by the teachers themselves on the basis of the "teachable group." Simply stated, the teachers choose those they feel most able to teach. Coleman said research indicated that neither age-grouping nor ability grouping had significant impact on student achievement. He said further that there is some evidence that the teachable group concept resulted in improvements of student grades and in the satisfaction of students and teachers with class systems.

As a note of caution, it should be understood that the teachable group concept relies heavily on team teaching and individualized instruction and does not use specialists to augment the staff. Coleman conceded that such a system places a heavy burden upon the teacher because it requires careful attention to individualized needs of students, careful planning, and creative and flexible instructional activities. He argued for the provision of aides to do routine and clerical work and for the provision of excellent library and audio-visual materials.

Eastside Alternative School operates a program which makes very little use of special teachers. In various other schools groups of children of a wide age range share a classroom. Other groups of teachers in small schools might develop a program of shared talents which would decrease the number of specialists required. The Task Force would not encourage this alternative unless the program developed was acceptable to the teachers, parents, and children involved.

Sharing of personnel between two schools should be explored. Perhaps one custodian could serve two schools. Cooking for the hot lunch program could be done at one school with a small savings in staff.

6 - Identify space available for noneducational use and set a policy for the most desirable use of space.

The capacity study recently completed by the Research, Development, and Evaluation Division of District 4J is the first step in this process. That study should continue to be refined, however, to allow adequate non-classroom space for each school. (See Chapter Eight, Program Capacity).

Short term use of district facilities by nonschool groups is covered in the Eugene Public Schools document Community Use of School Facilities, which opens with the following statement:

> In keeping with the theme of cooperation between School District 4J and the citizens of the Eugene School District, it is felt that school facilities

> should be used by the citizens of District 4J for the betterment of all in the best use of the total tax dollar.

The Task Force endorses this concept but feels a separate policy for long term leases should also be developed. The Task Force recommends that the District follow these criteria in setting policy for available space:

Priority should be given to other needs of District 4J. Additional office or storage space are examples.

The proposed use of a portion of a school building should be acceptable to the teachers, students, parents, and neighbors of the school.

The basic character of the building should not be changed through extensive remodeling.

The new use of space should not disrupt the educational program of the school.

The person or group leasing space should pay all operation and maintenance costs of the space involved. In the case of profit-making enterprises, rent should be charged. The District should continue and expand its program of cooperation with other public agencies. However, free use of the schools by other groups should be evaluated and the public made aware of the contribution of the schools. When new cooperative agreements are made, the total cost to all agencies should be considered. Experience in other communities shows that care must be taken that agencies housed in one building be compatible.

The proposed use should conform with all legal requirements for use of space such as zoning ordinances and federal nondiscrimination guidelines. There appear to be no insurmountable legal and zoning restraints on the use of the District's buildings, except for Stella Magladry School which must be used for "school purposes" under the terms of the will deeding the site to the District. None of the uses mentioned in this report are specifically prohibited by zoning, but such uses should be reviewed for appropriateness, intensity and magnitude.

The proposed use should be in conformance with the goals and policies adopted by the community.

Subject to the above criteria, the Task Force submits the following suggestions for desirable uses followed by specific examples in parentheses. The three suggestions are listed in descending order of preference:

1 - Public agencies providing direct services to citizens. (Public Library, Eugene Parks and Recreation, Lane Community College or University of Oregon adult classes)

2 - Nonprofit agencies providing public services. (Day care centers, extended day programs for children, senior citizens programs, Red Cross, Eugene Sports Program)

3 - Private groups or individuals. (Small professional offices, storage spaces or workshops for crafts people)

The Task Force has already received space requests from the Eugene Sports Program, the Red Cross, the Eugene Christian School, the Willamette Design Center and from two crafts people. At the two public hearings those responding to a question concerning use of part of a school preferred use by other educational or social service agencies.

7 - Develop procedure to attract and evaluate potential tenants.

To attract good tenants, the District should initiate community cooperation in planning for the above-mentioned uses. The fee schedule now in use should be reviewed. The wishes of parent and neighborhood groups should be considered. Prior to entering into lease arrangements with any group or program, the District should develop regulations to protect the District but which would also be fair to potential leasees.

Summary

The Task Force believes that parts of a building could be released for other uses.

The Task Force recommends that the School District first review its own needs for additional space. The need of a school for adequate non-classroom space should not be ignored. We urge that attendance area boundaries be redrawn where practical in order to relieve crowding. Portable facilities should be released for use in the north area. The Task Force further recommends that the District consider now any needs for space for expansion of existing special classes or for the institution of new programs such as classes for the gifted. Additional storage or office space needs should also be met before nondistrict tenants are sought.

The Task Force believes that small schools can be economically and educationally justified through innovative staffing and sharing of personnel with nearby schools.

Once the capacity study is refined and an inventory of actual extra space is made, the District should establish criteria and a procedure for leasing space in partially used buildings. Community residents should be involved in developing the policy and applying it to individual schools. Preference should be given to educational and social service groups and to nonprofit agencies, but commercial parties should also be considered eligible for surplus space.

TABLE ONE

DISPOSITION OF CLOSED FACILITIES BY DISTRICT

DISTRICT	Number Closed	Used for District Offices	Used for District Storage	Used for Other District Education Programs	Leased to Governmental Organizations	Leased to Private Firm	Replaced	Torn Down	Boarded Up	Offered for Sale	Sold
1 - Madison, WI	6				2	2				2	2
2 - Phoenix, AZ	3				1				1	1	
3 - Salt Lake City, UT	14									14	14
4 - Plainview, NY	1				1						
5 - Canton, OH	2			1	1						
6 - Cambrian, CA	1				1						
7 - Des Moines, IA	12				1					11	3
8 - Atlanta, GA	18	8			7					3	
9 - Great Falls, MT	2			2							
10 - Chula Vista, CA	TBC*										
11 - Downey, CA	4			2	1					1	1
12 - Denver, CO	4				2			1		1	1
13 - Los Altos, CA	1									1	1
14 - Dallas, TX	3	1	1						1		
15 - Charlotte, NC	8		1	1	2				3	1	1
16 - Philadelphia, PA	4				2	2					
17 - Freeport, NY	1				1						
18 - Torrance, CA	4			1	2					1	1
19 - Sampson County, NC	1			1							
20 - Wichita, KS	15				12					3	3
21 - Kansas City, MO	TBC										
22 - Minneapolis, MN	TBC										
23 - Spokane, WA	10		3					7			

TABLE ONE (Continued)

DISTRICT	Number Closed	Used for District Offices	Used for District Storage	Used for Other District Education Programs	Leased to Governmental Organizations	Leased to Private Firm	Replaced	Torn Down	Boarded Up	Offered for Sale	Sold
24 - Buffalo, NY	3			3							
25 - Arlington. VA	7				7						
26 - Columbia, SC	5				3					2	0
27 - Palo Alto, CA	2	1			1						
28 - Lansing, MI	2	2									
29 - Pittsburgh, PA	2								1	1	1
30 - Los Angeles, CA	3									3	3
31 - Seattle, WA	4			4							
32 - New Rochelle, NY	1			1							
33 - Hinsdale, IL	1							1			
34 - Glen Cove, NY	1			1							
35 - Santa Ana, CA	1							1			
36 - Kansas City, KS	5				5						
37 - Sacramento, CA	TBC										
38 - Santa Clara, CA	TBC										
39 - Eau Claire, WI	2							2			
40 - Hayward, CA	4			4							
41 - San Antonio, TX	2									2	0
42 - Nashville, TN	5				5						
43 - Houston, TX	2							2			
44 - Livonia, MI	4			2	2						
45 - Pontiac, MI	5			3					2		
46 - Abbeville, GA	3								3		
47 - Ann Arbor, MI	3	2		1							

TABLE ONE (Continued)

DISTRICT	Number Closed	Used for District Offices	Used for District Storage	Used for Other District Education Programs	Leased to Governmental Organizations	Leased to Private Firm	Replaced	Torn Down	Boarded Up	Offered for Sale	Sold
48 - Birmingham, MI	1								1		
49 - Peoria, IL	3							3			
TOTAL	185	14 7.6%	5 2.7%	27 14.1%	59 31.2%	4 2.1%	- -	17 9.4%	12 6.5%	47 25.8%	35

*To be closed

Source: R. L. Andrews et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF LOW ENROLLMENT SCHOOLS

Within the context of guidelines and criteria described in this report, the Task Force recommends the following procedure for evaluation of low enrollment schools.

When enrollment is less that 75% of program capacity in one or more schools, a committee made up of representatives from those schools' attendance areas, representatives from the School District, and representatives from the community at large should be appointed to answer the following questions. The committee should consider each school within the context of the entire school system. A full school year should be allowed for the committee to report and to gain community acceptance for their report. In the event a school is to be completely closed or a drastic change made in program, a second school year should be allowed to complete plans for the change and to make any alterations necessary in the building. If a decision is made to keep a school open and enrollment continues to decline, the evaluation should be repeated after two years.

a - Is the enrollment expected to increase in the next five to ten years?

b - Is the present use of space educationally justified?

c - Do nearby schools have sufficient space to receive the students of the school in question?

d - Can the students walk--and do so safely--to nearby schools?

e - If transportation must be provided, is it economically justified? What are the implications of increased bussing both from an economic standpoint and for the transportation system as a whole? Can Lane Transit District public busses be used?

f - What effect would closure have on the educational programs of the school being closed and of the receiving schools?
Should the program change, would it adversely affect the students?
Would closure adversely affect other district programs such as special classes and alternative schools?

g - What impact would school closure have on the neighborhood, both on the human character of the area and on property values?

h - Could this school operate with a reduced program?

i - What alternative uses are feasible and acceptable for the building?

j - Can it be used by the District? Can it be used for community purposes? What kinds of private uses would be appropriate for the building?

k - Is the condition of the building satisfactory? Does it need extensive repairs or remodeling?

l - Would closure of the school be contrary to the community's adopted goals, policies, and objectives?

m - What would the actual cash savings to the District be?

Of the nine schools represented on the Task Force, only Harris, Laurel Hill and Whiteaker have enrollments below 75% of program capacity. The following paragraphs briefly consider the above criteria (questions) as they apply to these three schools.

Harris School enrollment is 69% of program capacity and is projected to stabilize or to increase slightly. All space is being used for educational purposes since the special programs housed there require more space per pupil than regular programs require. The two nearest schools, Ellis Parker and Edison, do not have adequate space to accept all Harris students. Therefore, if Harris were closed some students would need to attend Frances Willard, Dunn, or Condon. Although distances are not great, additional bussing would be required to send students to any of the three schools. It should also be noted that Hilyard Street is heavily congested and the street is perceived as a neighborhood boundary by many residents. The deaf and EMR classes would have to be relocated--a factor to consider with children who need stability and familiar surroundings. The neighborhood could probably accept the loss of the school if parents were assured that better programs were available elsewhere and that good use was made of the building. Possibilities for alternative uses are wide: more of the District's special classes could be housed there, the facility could be used for a regional office or for District purposes, and the Eugene Sports Program, Lane Community College, the Red Cross, and the Eugene Christian School have all expressed interest in using surplus District space.

Because the Harris enrollment is nearly 250 students this year and because closure of this school would have impact on at least three buildings housing four programs, the Task Force recommends that Harris School be kept open but that alternative uses be found for some classrooms.

Laurel Hill, at 52% of program capacity, is the smallest enrollment school in the District. Projections are for a gradual increase in enrollment. If the school were closed, most students would have to be bussed. Since nearby schools do not have sufficient space, some students would have to be bussed a significant distance. Unless one of the alternative schools were moved, the combined extra capacity of Condon and Edison would not be large enough to house all of Laurel Hill's students. Thus some or all of them would be bussed to Harris, necessitating the transfer of the special program housed there. The Title I program requires a significant amount of ancillary space. Neighborhood commitment to Laurel Hill is high. Community School activities occur throughout the day. There would probably be strong neighborhood resentment to closure, particularly if students were bussed past two schools to the third, Harris.

The Task Force believes that closure of Laurel Hill is not desirable, but we do believe that a portion of the building should be released from regular school use. Four classrooms could be freed for alternative uses.

Activities that seem sensible are alternative schools such as an Outdoor school, a school for the gifted or day care on a fee basis. Leases for neighborhood services such as a laundromat or a buyer's co-op are also feasible. If enrollment continues to decline, innovative plans for grouping of students and allocation of personnel should be considered.

Whiteaker School has an enrollment of 63% of program capacity and is projected to stabilize with the possibility of increasing enrollment. Space is used for educational purposes with the Title I program requiring a significant amount of ancillary space. Space is available in the nearest schools: River Road, Lincoln, and Patterson. The traffic patterns around Whiteaker are among the busiest in town and students not bussed would be subjected to considerable hazard. Present bus runs would have to be extended and new ones added. This neighborhood, like Lincoln, is a target for Community Development funds in the City's commitment to stabilization of the City core. The school is the focal point of the neighborhood and is an active community center. No reduction in the program seems possible without negative consequence. If surplus space exists, it could be used to house students from the schools further to the north. Space could also be used for District storage, social services agencies, library, and day care or extended day care services on a fee basis.

The Task Force recommends that Whiteaker School should not be closed because of the City's efforts to stabilize the inner city.

The remaining schools represented on the Task Force were all above 75% of capacity. However, we shall briefly discuss these schools:

Coburg School, at 92% occupancy, is well utilized. The population is stable with a slight increase in elementary age children projected. The space in the school is used for educational programs during the school day and for community related activities at other times. There are no nearby schools. The closest schools, Gilham, Willakenzie, Meadow Lark, and Washington, do have sufficient space to receive these students but are located quite a distance from the children's homes. Closure of Coburg School would mean increased bussing cost. The increased bussing cost, the loss of a central feature of the community, and the lack of sensible alternative uses for the building indicate that Coburg School should be kept open.

Condon/Magnet Arts at 85% of program capacity remains above the criteria for occupancy. Enrollment is expected to remain stable. All space is currently being used for educational purposes. Nearby schools do not have sufficient space to receive all these students. Closure would mean that students now walking to school would be bussed out of the neighborhood. Closure would involve the regular program as well as the alternative school. While the regular program is similar to that in neighboring schools, the Magnet Arts program is unique and is enhanced by proximity to the University of Oregon. It is a Community School and the neighborhood has demonstrated a high degree of commitment to this school. We believe that this is a well-utilized building and no good would be served by closing it.

Edison/Eastside at 96% program capacity shares many of the characteristics of Condon/Magnet Arts. The building is being used to capacity by the regular school and an alternative school. Even without the alternative school enrollment at Edison and Condon neither school has sufficient capacity to accept the total enrollment of both schools. Closing of the school would require bussing of children outside the neighborhood and involve the relocation of an alternative school. Parent commitment to both programs is high. We recommend continued operation of this building in its present form.

Lincoln/Action High operates at 95% of program capacity. Action High is a unique alternative program that operates best in the vicinity of downtown. The regular elementary program shows stable enrollment. The City is committed to the stabilization of inner city neighborhoods and regards this school as integral to those plans. Space is available at Whiteaker, Patterson, and Willard with no appreciable increase in bussing. However, the school is surrounded by major traffic arterials, and students walking would face an increased hazard crossing these arterials. Closure would have a decisive impact on the Lincoln neighborhood. Families with small children would be discouraged from settling there. The school serves as a heavily utilized community center both within and outside of the regular school day. The Task Force supports the decision made by the School Board in 1974 to keep the building open for at least the next five years.

Magladry at 91% of program capacity is well utilized. Nearby schools, with the exception of Adams, have no extra space, and consolidation with Adams would mean the bussing of most students who now walk. The neighborhood has a high degree of commitment to the school. We believe the best interests of the District lie in retaining Magladry as a school. Furthermore, restrictions in the will giving this property to the District require that the land be used for school purposes.

Other schools meeting the criterion of less than 75% occupancy were not represented on this Task Force. These schools are Adams, Dunn, Meadow Lark, Parker, Patterson, and Willakenzie. The Task Force recommends that a committee be appointed to apply the above procedure and criteria to these schools.

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West Hartford Public Schools, West Hartford, Connecticut, Report

APPENDIX I

USE OF FACILITIES BY ACTIVITY
IN ALL DISTRICT 4J ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS 1974-75

Basketball

BiMart Employees
Ben's Club Cigars
Lane Co. Geographical Soc.
Campus Crusade for Christ
W.Broadway Church of Christ
KUGN
Joe Romania
Seventh Day Adventists
Youth Revival Center
Marquess Engr. Co.
L.D.S. Church
University St. Church of Christ
Emerald Baptist Church
Lane County Planning
Willakenzie Evangelical Church
Albertsons
Individual (15)
Santa Clara Assembly
1st Evangelical Church
BLSPA
Immanuel Baptist Church
U. of O. Dept. of Special Education

Basketball and Volleyball

Friendly Street Church of Christ
University Street Church of Christ
Worldwide Church of God

Volleyball

Individual (7)
Eugene McKenzie Steel
Emerald Baptist Church
Berean Baptist
Eugene Planing Mill
Norkenzie Christian Church
Bible School - University Park Baptist Church
Campus Crusade for Chri
Recreation and Park Management Students
Eugene Friends Church

Square Dancing

Individual
Bell Promenaders
Eugene Folk Dancers

Church

Faith Assembly of God

Miscellaneous

Coburg Activities Committee	Fund Raising Dance
Coburg Lions Club	Fund Raising Dinner
University of Oregon (CORBEH)	Special Classes
Chinese Physical Culture	(Individual)
Self Defense Class for Women	(Individual)
Amazing Rage Family Productions	Folk Concerts
Yoga Slimnastics	(Individual)
Beta Sigma Phi	Workshop
Triton Yacht Club	General Meetings
Willamette People's Co-op	Meeting of Board of Directors
Willamette People's Co-op	Meeting of Membership
Neighborhood Meetings	(Not City Chartered)
Middle Eastern Dancing	(Individual)
Amazon Neighborhood Association	Candidates Fair
Southwest Oregon Bulldog Club	Dog Show

Miscellaneous (continued)

University of Oregon	Activity Center for Handicapped
Willamette Christian Center	Organized Play
Friends Church	Church Breakfast
Common Cause	Meetings
L.C.C.	Classes
Performing Dance Groups	(Individual)
Preventive Mental Health Workshop	(Individual)
P.T.A.	Carnivals
Ba hai's of Central Lane County	Activities for Children
Guitar Lessons	(Individual)
Spencer Creek Lutheran Church	Potluck and Choir Concert
City of Eugene	Public Hearing
Dance Group	Practice
OMSI	Classes
Delta Kappa Gamma	Luncheon Meeting
Willakenzie Evangelical Church	Church Homecoming
Folk Dancing	Anniversary Dinner

No Charge Use of Facilities

Community Schools
River Road Park & Recreation
Girl Scouts and Brownies
Neighborhood Associations
(City Approved and Chartered)

Eugene Sports Program
Boy Scouts & Cub Scouts
P.T.A.'s and P.T.O.'s
4-H Clubs
P.T.A. Mother Singers
Clergy & Laity Concerned

Eugene Parks & Recreation
Campfire Girls and Bluebirds
Assistance Guild of Eugene
Welcome Wagon

APPENDIX II

COMMUNITY SCHOOL USES
OF
LINCOLN SCHOOL

Lincoln, being centrally located to all parts of Eugene, has been able to establish a very active community school program. Activities during the 1974-75 year fell into the categories of informal activities or structured organizations.

The following activities occurred mostly on a weekly or monthly basis:

Activities for Children

Fall	Winter	Spring
Arts and Crafts	Sports Activities	Open Gym
Brownies	Arts and Crafts	Cooking
Good Grooming Club	Gymnastics	Modern Dance
Girl Scouts	Bike Repair	Storytelling
Journalism	Girl Scouts	Filmmaking
Babysitting Class	Brownies	Outdoor Skills
Cooking	Fitness	Brownies
Sports Activities	Cooking	Softball
Gymnastics	Open Library	Arts and Crafts
Bike Repair Class	Macrame	Girl Scouts
	Modern Dance	Karate
	Karate	

Activities Primarily for Adults

Fall	Winter	Spring
Take Off Pounds Sensibly	Take Off Pounds Sensibly	Take Off Pounds Sensibly
Westside Neighborhood Q Project	WNQP	WNQP
Citizens' Advisory Council	Citizens' Advisory Council	Citizens' Advisory Counc
Stamp Society	Stamp Society	Stamp Society
Aquarium Society	Aquarium Society	Aquarium Society
Teen Night	Teen Night	Teen Night
Family Night	Family Night	Family Night
Open Library	Open Library	Men's Basketball
Men's Basketball	Men's Basketball	Open Volleyball
Open Volleyball	Open Volleyball	Couples' Volleyball
Couples' Volleyball	Couples' Volleyball	Couples' Basketball
Couples' Basketball	Couples' Basketball	Senior Citizens' Lunch
Senior Citizens' Lunch	Senior Citizens' Lunch	Native American Society
Parents Education Group	Native American Society	Community Health and Education Center
Bicycle Repair Class	Community Health and Education Center	Yoga for Women
Water Quality Group	Folk Dancing	Rape Prevention Class
Driver Ed. Class	Choral Group	U.S./China Friendship Association
Polynesian Dance	Bicycle Repair Class	
Childbirth Ed. Class		

APPENDIX III

EXCERPTS OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT HEARINGS
NOVEMBER 5 AND 13, 1975

Many speakers noted educational and social advantages of the small school over the large school. Emphasis was placed on the benefits of more individulized attention.

Examples: Ed Singer (Magladry) November 5: "I have a hyperactive child and a very bright child, and in the big school they came from, they were just part of the herd. They look forward to school now, and I think it's the small school that makes the difference."

Nancy Reynolds (Condon) November 13: "It is the quality of education found in the small schools that is important to me, not whether the space is used to capacity."

Many speakers saw the small school as the center for community and neighborhood activity and identity, and they stressed the importance of its social influence.

Examples: Bruce Starkweather (Edison) November 5: "Small schools are the hub of city neighborhoods. Eugene is experiencing a rebirth of its inner city neighborhoods. The neighborhood associations are an outgrowth of this."

Holly Parker (Senior Citizen from Laurel Hill) November 5: "We contributed our work to build a playground for Laurel Hill School so that they could have a community playground all year round... I like to think of the school as a place where there are older people like myself watching out the windows when the children come home from school."

John Clyde (Laurel Hill) November 13: "There is a spirit of genuine cooperation in the neighborhood through our school. The community school program brings neighbors together daily. I hate to contemplate closure which to me would be penny wise but pound foolish."

Bob Wright (Harris) November 5: "One of the things I and my family were looking for when we moved to the Harris district was a sense of permanence that we could find in a neighborhood. We want to have that sense of permanence that we could find in a neighborhood to offset some of the other changes that we are not going to have any control over."

Gary Spivak (Whiteaker) November 13: "We couldn't have been where we are without a community school."

A number of speakers saw the continued existence of the schools as necessary in combating further urban deterioration. Closure, it was pointed out, would be inconsistent with efforts by the city to rejuvenate these areas and would have negative effects on neighborhood property values.

Examples: Neil Murray (Lincoln, Eugene City Council) November 5: "I think it's extremely important that our battle against central city blight be won. Good central city schools are an important -- even central -- weapon in this battle. Families simply won't return to the cities if there are no schools there. Our city has made a major financial long-term investment in a certain portion of the city. Our investment will only be realized if people want to live in the neighborhood. And that means people who raise children. If we have the school district working against that goal, we have wasted a substantial amount of money."

Sharon Posner (League of Women Voters) November 13: "Even temporary closure of a neighborhood school would be a severe blow to the neighborhood's residential durability. This, in turn, would run counter to the primary goal of the 1990 Plan to achieve a compact urban growth pattern aimed at reducing our dependence on auto travel and taking fullest advantage of existing city services."

Doug McCool (Edison) November 5: "To close our neighborhood school would decrease the value of our property."

Bob Napier (West Side Neighborhood Quality Project) November 13: "School closure or temporary closure would mean that we would be operating at cross purposes with our city government and the 1990 Plan."

Other arguments which were advanced against closure, but which did not seem to be of central importance to the speakers were the following:

1 - School closure would mean bussing. Bussing is unacceptable. Walking or cycling preferable. Elsa Struble from Harris, November 13; Bruce Starkweather from Edison, November 5; Holly Parker from Laurel Hill, November 5; Gentleman from Coburg, November 13; and John Clyde from Laurel Hill, November 13.

2 - There is less crime and vandalism in smaller schools than in larger schools, and closed schools are targets for vandalism. Molly Stafford from Lincoln, November 13; Paul Green from Lincoln, November 13.

3 - Parent participation in school projects would decrease significantly. Gentleman from Edison, November 5; Holly Parker from Laurel Hill, November 5.

There was some discussion of several other matters relating to small schools. The new staffing plan was attacked by some. Al Urquhart from Condon, Scott Lieuellen from Lincoln, November 13; and grudgingly supported by others if it is a condition of the retention of keeping small schools. Elsa Struble, November 13. A few speakers were concerned about whether other areas for saving money were being considered by the district.

APPENDIX IV

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Suggestions For Alternative Uses of School Buildings, Parts of Buildings

43 persons responded

2 - Headquarters for neighborhood associations

24 - Schools, workshops: bicycle maintenance, adult education night classes, Lane Community College classes closer to neighborhood, vocational training, classes for exceptional students, advanced students, music, art, survival and communication skills, language school, small junior high or high schools, South Eugene night classes, alternative schools.

1 - Voting centers

1 - Commercial enterprises which can educate: bakeries, furniture repair, bicycle repair, bookstores, wood shops.

8 - Day care centers: tuition free, co-op, preschool.

1 - Scouting functions

3 - Lease for office space

1 - Lease for storage

5 - Health care programs: classes for deaf, treatment and diagnostic centers for learning disabled, handicapped children.

1 - Tool co-ops

1 - Remodel for time when enrollment is large

10 - Athletic functions: gymnasiums, adult recreation, senior citizen, after school sports.

3 - Parks and Recreation programs

2 - Public agency use

1 - Church functions

1 - 4-H

Reasons to Close Those Schools Which Have a Substantial Number of Empty Seats

21 persons responded

16 - No reason

1 - Dangerous dilapidation

3 - Higher per student cost

1 - Enrollment drop and parents not willing to cooperate to help cut costs

Reasons to Keep Open Those Schools Which Have a Substantial Number of Empty Seats

55 persons responded

3 - Lack of sufficient savings to warrant closure

4 - Save energy

2 - Bussing more costly

6 - Population will soon rise

17 - Encourage sense of neighborhood

25 - Higher quality of education

2 - Increase in real estate value

9 - Walking distance

Your Feelings About the Closure of Your School

61 persons responded

All responses were negative to the idea of closure of schools. Quality of education, and loss of community feeling were listed as the reason in the majority of cases.

Your Feelings About the Closure of Other Schools

24 persons responded

1 - Only if school dangerously dilapidated

1 - Only if neighborhood requests it

22 - Don't close any school

Your Feelings About Small Schools as Compared to Large Schools

62 persons responded

25 - Higher quality education, more individual attention

14 - More socially well-rounded, friendship between student, teacher, parent, and neighbors

3 - Behavior more easily controlled

Any Other Comments

37 persons responded

36 - Don't close schools

2 - Poll the children

2 - Small schools should receive the extras that large schools have; staff, counselors, music, art, math, reading, media

2 - Willing to pay extra tax

1 - Trimming should not be done at elementary level

1 - Alter school district lines to achieve minimal enrollment levels

1 - Could Land Transit District public busses be used to cut cost?

2 - Have centralized kitchen or have children bring lunch

7 - Quality of education is higher in small schools

4 - School increases sense of neighborhood

1 - Small student/teacher ratios are more important than special programs

1 - Have a city tax used for other city matters, use higher proportion of property tax for schools

2 - Tighten belts at the administration level

1 - School enrollment will rise

1 - What is total cost to the taxpayer?

APPENDIX V

CITY
OF
EUGENE

MAYOR
LESTER E. ANDERSON

COUNCIL
WICKES BEAL
TOM WILLIAMS
GUS KELLER
NEIL MURRAY
RAY BRADLEY
BILL HAMEL
ERIC HAWS
EDNA SHIREY

777 PEARL STREET
P. O. BOX 1967
EUGENE, OREGON 97401

November 10, 1975

Mike Shellenbarger, Chairperson
Small Schools Task Force
School of Architecture
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

Dear Mike;

Although I testified at one of the Task Force's hearings, I wanted to address myself to your report at greater length.

I'm especially appreciative of the breadth and sensitivity of the Task Force report. It's obvious that your group has functioned with clarity of purpose and deliberate methodology. In light of last year's events, this, in itself, is a major accomplishment.

As you know, it's my position that the Task Force recommendation against school closures is well-conceived and proper. I think this merits added emphasis with regard to central city schools, especially Lincoln and Whiteaker.

For several years, the City of Eugene has noticed signs of creeping blight in our inner city neighborhoods. For instance, an alarming assumption appears in our City's Community Goals Statement: "Eugene's older neighborhoods, graced with tree-lined streets and architectural quality and character, will further deteriorate unless public policies are altered." Without a doubt, one of the more dramatic measures of this piece-by-piece decline has been the decrease in central city school enrollment.

But until recently, Eugene's alarm was only rhetorical. Action, alteration of public policies, and dollars did not follow. Central city neighborhoods grew worse and so too did the problems of the schools. Now, for the first time, we are definitely embarked upon a course that is attempting to reverse central city decline. Considerable effort is being given to rehabilitating homes, providing and improving parks, curing traffic ills, stabilizing zoning, etc. Our aim, as stated in the Community Statement, is to "...preserve, restore, and improve the residential quality of inner city neighborhoods...so that families will find inner city living more attractive."

Obviously, one result of our success would be a change in the enrollment patterns of central city schools. In other words, if we succeed, the School District's "problem" will be eliminated. But we won't succeed overnight. The middle class exodus from the central city has been going on for decades. Reversal will also take time.

We do have advantages: economic factors that discourage young families from buying new homes, energy problems that make central city living more desirable, thriving central city neighborhood groups, a current wave of appreciation for the visible signs of our heritage, and the fact that our central city is still a comparatively high quality environment. To this point, we've also had the advantage of good, stable schools.

I think it's extremely important that our battle against central city blight be won. If it's not, our city will be like so many others - rotten at the core with disease spreading outward like contagion. In the end, we'll all get caught in an ugly, sprawling, costly, urban web. Nobody will win.

Good central city schools are an important - even critical - weapon in this battle. Families simply won't return to the central city if there are no schools there. The School District, in my opinion, has already hindered our efforts with its careless and untimely treatment of the Lincoln School issue last year. Families will also not return to the central city if there are only partial schools - grades 1-3 or 4-6 or some other unattractive scheme. This is what I'd call a "slow death" option. I find no appeal in it whatsoever. We need good, stable, full-service schools. If we don't have them, we'll be fighting with one hand tied behind our back. Recognizing the tremendous momentum and force of the middle class exodus, I shiver to think of the outcome.

One thing however is abundantly clear and points to a disgraceful aspect of this kind of decision. That is, once schools are closed, the people who will be left behind and expected to carry the social burden by bussing their children and doing without the benefits of a neighborhood school will be those whose low income prevents them from relocating in a middle class neighborhood. Wealthier parents will simply pick up and move as they've done so many times before. The poor, unable to afford this kind of upward mobility, will be punished.

Underlying all this is the absurdly false economy of central city school closures. Your report succeeds in demonstrating just how limited savings would be. Even if you have erred, the savings which would result from closure is absolutely insignificant when compared to how much public money will be wasted if central city schools are closed. Right now, the City of Eugene has made a three year commitment to central city improvement which goes above and beyond the normal delivery and maintenance of services $2,573,400; $1,259,360 of this is to be spent on a Neighborhood Improvement Program in the immediate Lincoln School neighborhood. Future Neighborhood Improvement Programs have been earmarked for the Whiteaker neighborhood and the West University neighborhood, also in the Lincoln service area.

This money will not be spent by School District 4-J, but it is public money. The taxpayer is less concerned with who collects and disperses funds than he is with how much gets spent and how wisely. If the School District closes central city schools, it will be guaranteeing public waste and inefficiency on a very grand scale.

Instead of threatening closure, the School District ought to be practicing good citizenship by increasing its support for central city schools. This could make our road a little easier to travel and work to the mutual resolution of both the School District's and City's "problems." To do otherwise, is to unwittingly become a major contributing partner in an unspoken conspiracy to destroy central city neighborhoods and embrace costly urban sprawl. If there is any wisdom in this approach, it completely escapes me.

Once again, thanks for your efforts and those of the Task Force. Your report is extremely well done.

Sincerely,

Neil Murray/jd

Neil Murray
City Council, Ward 7

NM:jd

cc: Bob Thomas
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